National Restaurant Association

Vol. 6 ☐ No. 1 ☐ January 1986

NRA NEWS

NRA MEETINGS

Seminars

Basic Foodservice Courses

Basic Supervision in Foodservice
2/25 Burlington, VT
3/10 Shreveport, LA

Dining Room Management
1/21 Springfield, VA
1/27 Orlando, FL
2/3 San Antonio, TX
2/4 Austin, TX
3/5 Springfield, MA
3/10 Grand Rapids, MI
3/11 Kansas City, MO

Kitchen Management
1/21 Fort Worth, TX
1/28 Cincinnati, OH
2/4 Springfield, VA
2/6 Atlantic City, NJ
2/27 Indianapolis, IN
3/3 Boston, MA
3/10 Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
3/11 Calgary, Alberta, Canada

People-Power and Profits
2/11 Columbia, SC
3/27 Fort Worth, TX

Tools for Training
3/4 Boston, MA

Food Production Courses

Perfecting Your Culinary Skills
1/28 Kansas City, MO
2/4 Tampa, FL
2/24 Cincinnati, OH

Simplified Baking Workshop
2/27 Portland, ME
3/11 Baltimore, MD

Soups and Sauces
1/20 Van Nuys, CA
3/3 Boston, MA
3/4 Philadelphia, PA

Foodservice Management Courses

Banquet Management
2/3 Lexington, KY
2/26 Denver, CO

Beverage Management
2/25–26 Newport Beach, CA
3/3–4 Boston, MA

Business Dynamics for Women in Foodservice
2/6 Washington, DC

Introduction to Computers in Foodservice
2/17 Raleigh, NC
3/3 Providence, RI
3/10 Newark, NJ

Creative Buffets
3/4 Boston, MA
3/10 Portland, OR
3/11 Seattle, WA
3/27 Rochester, NY

Employee Motivation
3/4 Williamsburg, VA
3/6 Gatlinburg, TN

Food Cost Management
1/20 Jacksonville, FL
1/22 Atlanta, GA
2/25 Minneapolis, MN
2/27 Cleveland, OH
3/5 Williamsburg, VA
3/21 Salt Lake City, UT

Foodservice Operators' Legal Workshop
2/4 Boston, MA
3/2 Washington, DC
3/5 San Francisco, CA
3/21 Denver, CO

Menu Development
2/26 Baltimore, MD
3/24 Tucson, AZ

Negotiating for, and Financing, Foodservice Facilities
2/6–7 San Francisco, CA
3/26–27 Fort Worth, TX

Off-Premise Catering
2/10–11 Toronto, Ontario, Canada
3/24–25 Vienna, VA

Operational Analysis
2/25–26 Madison, WI
3/25–26 Minneapolis, MN

Planning and Implementing Restaurant Marketing Strategy
1/22–23 Houston, TX
2/25–26 King of Prussia, PA
3/26–27 Portland, OR

Real Estate & Restaurant Site Selection
1/21–22 Monterey, CA
2/10–11 Chicago, IL

Restaurant Design and Facilities Planning
3/24–25 San Diego, CA

National Conferences

INFO 86: Independent Operators' National Conference
2/16–19 Orlando, FL

National Conference on Computers in Foodservice
3/16–19 Washington, DC

For more information, contact NRA Education Programs 311 First Street, NW Washington, DC 20001 (202) 638-6100 or (800) 424-5156

1986 Study Group Meetings

Foodservice Security Council
1/20–22 Chicago, IL

Safety Officers
1/22–24 Chicago, IL

Large Independent Operators
2/14–16 Orlando, FL

Labor Relations
2/25–26 Memphis, TN

Financial Officers
4/2–5 Lake Tahoe, NV

Tax Executives
4/2–5 Lake Tahoe, NV

Market Research
4/9–11 Atlanta, GA

Management Information Systems (MIS)
4/13–16 Lake of the Ozarks, MO

For more information on specific study groups, contact Philip Kralovec, (312) 853-2525.

NRA NEWS

Vol. 6 No. 1 January 1986

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ted Balestreri
Co-Owner
The Sardine Factory, Inc.
Monterey, California

Tax simplification bill headed to Senate

When Congress reconvenes late this month, the fate of the tax simplification plan will be in the hands of the Senate. Due to heavy lobbying on the part of President Reagan, the House passed its version of the bill just before the December recess. The House version of the bill includes a provision which would limit deductions on both business marketing meals and business travel meals to 80 percent of actual dollars spent.

NRA will use all its resources to oppose inclusion of business meal deduction limitations in the Senate version of the bill. But we need your help.

It is not at all clear whether Congress or the administration has a full appreciation of the effect the 80 percent limitation will have on our industry and the economy. I urge you to contact your senators and explain the effect this provision will have on you—both as a foodservice operator and a taxpayer.

Future of TJTC unknown

Extension of the targeted jobs tax credit (TJTC) also remains in limbo until after Congress reconvenes. Shortly before the recess both the House and Senate discarded controversial bills dealing with the deficit, which contained provisions to extend TJTC. NRA will renew its efforts to ensure the continuation of TJTC when Congress reconvenes.

Any reinstatement of TJTC is likely to be retroactive to January 1, 1986. Since the current TJTC law expires December 31, however, operators may find that state employment offices stop participating as of January 1, 1986.

Symposium scheduled on product and service liability

You should be seeing media reports later this month about a national symposium on *The Crisis in Product and Service Liability*. The liquor liability problem faced by foodservice operators is part of a general crisis in product and service liability which is affecting physicians, city and county governments, manufacturers, day care centers and others. Eventually, this crisis will affect the average consumer as higher insurance rates raise prices or cause goods and services to be withdrawn from the market.

Sponsored by Pennsylvania State University in conjunction with NRA, the symposium will take a close look at how promiscuous litigation is affecting our country. This discussion should raise public awareness of what irresponsible litigation is costing our society and publicize the need to reform tort laws, including dramshop laws, in order to reduce the number of cases brought before the courts.

Plan to attend this one-day program, Wednesday, January 29, in Washington, DC. For more information on the symposium, contact NRA's communications department.

Survey shows insurance rates double

The foodservice industry is at the forefront of this crisis as the number of third party liquor liability cases rises. A recent survey conducted for NRA by Gallup, reveals that liquor liability insurance costs have jumped 110 percent during the past year. The average cost for this kind of insurance has reached $39,500 per year.

New NRA "how to" book published

NRA is using these figures to support the need for reasonable dramshop legislation.

NRA will soon release the latest in its "how-to series," *A Restaurateur's Guide to Nutrition*. It was developed in response to the growing attention both the government and the public are giving to lighter, healthier foods. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has just reissued its dietary guidelines and will continue to focus the public's attention on the relationship between sodium and cholesterol intake and heart disease during 1986.

The public's desire for a wider variety of light food options can no longer be regarded as a passing fad. It is a trend that will continue to grow in the year ahead.

The new manual describes types of menu items and preparations which conform to the dietary guidelines and the continued consumer interest in light fare. *A Restaurateur's Guide to Nutrition* will be available in February and can be ordered from the NRA publications department.

Send back your surveys

NRA is surveying its membership for the *1986 Restaurant Industry Operations Report*. If you receive a copy of the survey in the mail, please fill it out and return it to NRA as soon as possible. For more information see "Short Orders" in this issue.

NRA Computer Conference to be held in March

The association has finalized its educational programs for the first half of 1986. Coming up on March 16–19 in Washington, DC, is the third annual *NRA National Conference on Computers in Foodservice*. One of the most popular programs in the NRA Conference Series, *Computers in Foodservice* is both an educational forum and a mini trade show. Many of the largest computer suppliers to the foodservice industry will be on hand to demonstrate their latest equipment.

This national conference provides an excellent opportunity for foodservice operators interested in purchasing a new system or updating their present system. If you need a comprehensive orientation to computers in foodservice, this conference is a great place to start. Contact NRA's education programs department for more information.

Five new NRA seminars to be introduced in 1986

NRA is also introducing five new seminar programs this year to keep up with your needs. The diverse group of new programs includes: *Business Dynamics for Women in Foodservice*, *Foodservice Operators' Legal Workshop*, *Negotiating for and Financing Foodservice Facilities*, *Wine and the Bottom Line* and *Beverage Management*. For more information on these new programs, see the back cover of this issue of ***NRA NEWS.***

During December, 160 foodservice operators and allied suppliers joined us as members of NRA. Welcome. Your participation in NRA will make your business grow and make your association more effective in its endeavors on your behalf.

Sincerely,

Ted Balestreri
President and Chairman of the Board

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Cover Story: Restaurant Image

When a restaurant image works, it creates that special feeling or sparkle that makes it stand apart from the crowd. Clearly communicating that image is not always easy. That is why this issue of ***NRA NEWS*** inaugurates a series of articles on restaurant design, with special pointers and tips to help operators develop and communicate a consistent, effective image.

11 Atmospheric and personality factors affect your restaurant's image.

12 How to find the design that fits your operation.

18 Debunking five design myths.

20 Exterior signs: A 24-hour invitation.

Related department: How's Business?

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Cover photograph by Gary D. Landsman
Neon by Ariane Dubois

SHORT ORDERS

NRA's Palmer leads seminar

NRA's new seminar, "Foodservice Operator's Legal Workshop," will be introduced throughout the country this year. NRA's legal counsel Robert Palmer will address dozens of legal issues that affect the foodservice business. Designed for the hands-on operator rather than the corporate lawyer, this seminar will provide you with uncomplicated answers to many of today's pressing legal issues.

Palmer's thorough, practical and spirited approach has gained him high praise in many educational programs sponsored by NRA. If you have legal foodservice questions you would like answered, plan to attend one of Palmer's seminars.

During the first half of 1986, "Foodservice Operators Legal Workshop" will be offered on

- Tuesday, February 4 in Boston, MA, co-sponsored by the Massachusetts Restaurant Association
- Sunday, March 2 in Washington, DC, co-sponsored by the Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington
- Wednesday, March 5 in San Francisco, CA, co-sponsored by the California Restaurant Association
- Friday, March 21 in Denver, CO, co-sponsored by the Colorado-Wyoming Restaurant Association
- Sunday, May 18 in Chicago, IL, at the NRA Show
- Tuesday, June 10 in Philadelphia, PA, co-sponsored by the Pennsylvania Restaurant Association
- Monday, June 16 in Miami, FL, co-sponsored by the Florida Restaurant Association

The fee for the course is $145 for NRA members or co-sponsoring state association members and $185 for non-members. To register, contact NRA Education Programs in Washington, DC, or the co-sponsoring state association.

Correction

September's "To Your Health" column on naturally-occurring food toxins reported that histamine, a toxin that could develop in improperly stored fish, can be inactivated by temperatures above 140°F. It has been brought to our attention that studies have shown that histamine is heat stable at temperatures as high as 212°F—the boiling point of water. Therefore, the most effective means of controlling histamine is to store fish at temperatures lower than 40°F.

March is nutrition month

"Good Nutrition—Feel the Difference" is the theme of this year's American Dietetic Association (ADA) National Nutrition Month, which takes place in March. The purpose of this 14th annual campaign is to emphasize the benefits of good nutrition and fitness. ADA has developed a variety of materials, including posters, table tents and a children's activity booklet, to help promote nutritional awareness. For ordering information contact: Sales Order Dept., The American Dietetic Association, P.O. Box 10960, Chicago, IL 60610; or call (312) 280-5000.

If you are interested in participating in local nutrition month activities, contact your state dietetic association. For the name and number of your local contact person, call ADA's Division of Policy Administration at (312) 280-5069.

Watch your mailbox for NRA questionnaire

NRA members should be on the lookout for their "1986 Restaurant Industry Operations" questionnaire, which is being mailed to all NRA member companies in early January. This questionnaire provides NRA with the information needed to publish its annual *Restaurant Industry Operations Report*, and all members are urged to complete the survey. The success of this project depends on your cooperation.

As a bonus, those who complete the survey and return it by February 28, 1986, will receive a complimentary copy of the full report.

If you do not receive a questionnaire or if you need additional copies, write NRA's Research Department, 311 First St., N.W., Washington, DC 20001 or call (800) 424-5156.

WASHINGTON REPORT

Interview with Rep. Jim Wright

Now in his fifth term as majority leader of the House, U.S. Rep. Jim Wright (D-TX) is one of the most respected members of Congress and is regarded by many as its most persuasive debater. Elected majority leader in a close contest with three others in 1976, Wright has been unanimously re-elected four times to this post, which is second only to the Speaker of the House. The majority leader is the chief strategist and floor spokesman for the party in control.

Wright, serving his 16th consecutive term in Congress, is the author of major legislation in the fields of foreign affairs, economic development, water conservation, education and energy.

***NRA NEWS** recently spoke to the majority leader on a range of topics.*

***NRA NEWS*: You once described the role of majority leader as part parish priest, part evangelist and part prophet. Can you elaborate on that?**

Wright: In the same vein, I have also said the majority leader is part den mother, part traveling salesman and part advance planner. In the parish priest or den mother role, he has to know his colleagues, accept their idiosyncracies and their differences, have the ability to smooth over jurisdictional and regional problems and try as best as he can to create a harmonious fellowship among the members of the House.

Once having established the legislative program and scheduled bills for consideration on the floor, he has to be an evangelist or traveling salesman. He has the responsibility to sell those bills—to convince people of the merits. Not only must he convince the members that they ought to vote for these measures, but he also must go out to the members' districts when invited and speak to local audiences about what Congress is trying to accomplish.

In the final role as prophet or advance planner, he must look down the road and prepare the members for any problems on the horizon—and, if possible, head them off before they arise.

Q: You have been in Congress for 30 years. Do you think the majority leader's job is more difficult today than it was when you first came to Congress?

A: This is a more participatory body than it was then, so in that sense the job is more difficult. In Sam Rayburn's day (Speaker of the House from 1940 to 1957), for example, there was no House Steering and Policy Committee to which he had to sell a program. One existed but in name only. For all practical purposes, Rayburn was the Steering and Policy Committee. The committee would meet once a year and pass some pious resolutions and then adjourn. Meanwhile, Rayburn would announce leadership policy. Today, you have to work with that policy committee and persuade them of your positions.

Q: What about the job of being a congressman. How has that changed?

A: For one thing, the issues are more complex. No individual member truly can be an authority on all subjects. One day you will be making judgments about our monetary system. The next day you will be making decisions on agriculture policy or foreign relations. On another day you may have to vote on what weapon systems should merit research and development funds.

Nobody can know enough about all these issues. The best you can do is to cultivate a network of acquaintances whose judgments and integrity you respect. When you have questions about a bill, you go to one of your friends on the committee that has jurisdiction over the measure and seek what counsel you can.

Q: You have spoken out on what you term the "splintering of America"—the proliferation of caucuses and interest groups. You have also criticized members who seem to favor "image" over "substance." What effect have these trends had on your job and on Congress as an institution?

A: They have made it more difficult to achieve consensus in the national interest. The only thing I can do about it as majority leader is to try to convince people of their responsiblity to the country.

The typical member sometimes becomes so obsessed with the impression the public will get from tomorrow's headlines that he is likely to forget that he is legislating not just for tomorrow but for a year or 10 years down the road. A bill passed in haste, which might be very joyously received on the spur of the moment, could be a poorly conceived piece of legislation that would not serve us well over the long haul.

One example of this comes instantly to mind. In 1981, Congress allowed itself to be stampeded into voting for a massive tax cut—the biggest cut in American history. It is now

bleeding the Treasury to the tune of $135 billion a year. The tax bill was very popular at the moment it passed. However, it did not take the public very long to discover that the tax cut was excessive and that it was setting the stage for a monumental deficit.

Q: On the deficit issue, what do you think should be done to get ourselves back on the right fiscal track?

A: We have reached a point of near desperation. A mechanism to force uniform cuts across the board at a fixed percentage rate, save for those programs you specifically exempted, may be the only way to achieve a certain level of deficit reduction.

With this kind of legislation, the President's function must be ministerial, not discretionary. In other words, the President cannot be permitted to make cuts at whim in programs he dislikes, preserving those things that are his pets. By requiring that the cuts be uniform and across-the-board, Congress preserves its constitutional authority to establish the nation's spending priorities.

Q: The budget process was totally revamped just over a decade ago by the 1974 Budget Act. Some are now saying more changes are needed to make the process work. What is your assessment?

A: The process has not worked as well as we had hoped it would. It is far from a perfect instrument, but it is better than what we had before we began the current process. Prior to the 1974 Act, we had a series of 13 or 14 appropriations bills being presented at different times without any general idea of how they would fit together. It was as if we were building a house without a blueprint. We called in 14 carpenters, and said to each of them, "Just build me a room." We might end up with three kitchens and no bedrooms or five bathrooms and no dining room. So the 1974 Act has been for Congress the equivalent of the set of building plans for a house.

As far as changing the system we have now, I think tinkering with it is productive only when you decide that it is not working. The system does work. It never will work perfectly because we are imperfect creatures. Members of Congress are not an undiluted collection of saints; neither are we a group of Olympian prophets and seers of great wisdom. We are rather ordinary people. So no matter how much tinkering you do with the machinery, it is impossible to make Congress a perfect institution.

Plant closings bill rejected

A bill to require employers to give employees advance notice of a plant shutdown or mass layoff was defeated by a five-vote margin on the House floor in late November.

The bill would have required companies (including restaurants) employing 50 or more full-time workers to give 90 days advance notice of a closing. Although plant closing legislation has been introduced since 1973, this is the first version to reach a vote on the House floor.

H.R. 1616, introduced by Rep. William Ford (D-MI), traveled a rocky road before coming to a final vote. Ford was forced to pull the bill from the floor at one point after an attack was launched to remove major provisions of the bill.

The bill failed to gain a majority vote even after Ford allowed a watered-down version to be substituted for his original bill. Strong business lobbying blocked the final attempt at passage, however. Business groups labeled the bill "pro-union," saying that the bill would give unions more leverage over employers and aid in efforts to unionize workers.

NRA opposed this legislation, arguing that early notification of a possible restaurant closing could choke off sources of new financing and make going out of business even more certain.

The administration also opposed this legislation. Labor Secretary William E. Brock noted that the bill could cause more extended business failures if failing plants were forced by the legislation to delay closing.

The effort to implement a plant closing law will be stalled at least through the end of 1986. Legislators are expected to wait for the results of a commission Brock created to study ways to minimize the effects of plant closings on workers and affected communities.

DOL reviews exempt manager rules

Rules governing treatment of exempt managers are finally being reviewed by the Department of Labor (DOL). At issue is how to determine whether an employee is exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act's (FLSA) minimum wage and overtime requirements.

Because current rules have not been updated in many years, DOL has found it increasingly difficult to apply the rules fairly in new and evolving industries. Under current law, employees paid at least $155 a week are exempt from overtime requirements if they meet five other tests pertaining to their duties.

NRA has repeatedly urged DOL to review its criteria for exempt managers. The non-managerial duties test has posed a problem for foodservice operators. "Working" supervisors or those with many hands-on duties, such as executive chefs, are often difficult to qualify as exempt employees.

DOL published its intent to review its exempt manager policy in an "advance notice of proposed rulemaking" in the *Federal Register* on Nov. 19. The department is seeking comments on several questions regarding the salary and duties tests currently used to determine an exemption.

To obtain a copy of the DOL announcement or express your views on the exempt manager question, contact the NRA Legal Department at (800) 424-5156. NRA will be submitting comments to DOL and would appreciate any insights from NRA members who are affected by the rules.

Minnesota Restaurant & Foodservice Association Executive Vice President Arnold Hewes, left, and NRA Executive Vice President William Fisher, right, discuss the effect of tax changes on the restaurant industry with Sen. David Durenberger (R-MN). Durenberger is a member of the Senate Finance Committee, which handles tax issues.

NRA shifts focus to Senate on business meal issue

NRA lobbyists are shifting their fight to the Senate Finance Committee to preserve the business marketing meal deduction now that the House has completed work on tax reform.

NRA remains optimistic about efforts to retain 100 percent deductibility for business meals. The Finance Committee is expected to take up tax reform early this year.

The Ways and Means Committee finished work on its tax overhaul bill in late November, preparing the bill for House floor consideration in early December. The bill was nearly declared dead on Dec. 11 when it failed to muster enough votes for floor action. However, intensive lobbying by the President paved the way for passage on Dec. 17.

NRA and its hospitality industry allies fought an uphill battle to preserve the business meal deduction during Ways and Means deliberations in November. The industry nearly succeeded when the committee took up an NRA-supported amendment by committee member Wyche Fowler (D-GA) to impose severe penalities on abusers of the deduction while retaining full deductibility.

After the Fowler amendment was defeated by just two votes (19–17), the committee accepted an amendment by Rep. Judd Gregg (R-NH) to reduce business meal and entertainment expense deductions to 80 percent. Committee Chairman Dan Rostenkowski (D-IL), who had earlier proposed limiting business meal deductibility to 75 percent, warned the committee that the Fowler amendment would "kill tax reform" and reportedly threatened to come down hard on those who voted against his plan.

The committee's final tax reform proposal would also limit general business entertainment expenses to 80 percent, including those for hospitality suites, receptions, catered events and tickets to sporting events.

Although there remains some confusion regarding the committee's intent, it appears that if the Ways and Means bill were enacted, it would also limit travel-related meal expense deductions to 80 percent—even if no entertainment is involved. However, the committee's bill would allow 100 percent deductibility for away-from-home business transportation and lodging expenses.

NRA President Ted Balestreri called the committee's decision "unprecedented, unwarranted and economically irrational." He warned that "every restaurant in the country will feel the effects of any limitation on the business meal deduction."

Chase Econometrics, which earlier this year was commissioned by NRA to study the effect of the President's tax reform proposal on the industry, estimates that the House bill would result in the loss of 395,000 foodservice jobs in the first year of its enactment.

Total sales lost to the industry during the first year from the House bill plan would be $10.28 billion, according to Chase Econometrics.

New developments in comparable worth issue

Comparable worth, the issue of correcting pay disparities between traditionally male and traditionally female jobs, has received a lot of attention both in Congress and in the states.

The U.S. House of Representatives has approved bill H.R. 3008, that would require an 18-month study of the federal work force to determine if women are paid less than men for jobs requiring similar skills.

The House bill would also require the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to provide technical assistance to private sector businesses that wish to implement equal pay for jobs of comparable worth.

The Senate has not taken up the comparable worth issue and is not expected to act on any legislation. The Reagan administration and many business leaders, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, oppose this legislation.

Comparable worth advocates believe that the market discriminates against "female" jobs. They want to base compensation on the assignment of values to occupations according to the skill, effort, training, responsibility and working conditions associated with those positions.

Opponents of comparable worth argue that women as a group are paid less, not because of discrimination but because they have, on the whole, less work experience and more work interruptions than men. The only efficient way to determine compensation, according to opponents, is to depend on the market forces of supply and demand.

Comparable worth has been a hot issue for state governments too. A landmark court case that had ordered Washington state to give substantial pay raises to female employees was recently overturned by a U.S. District Court of Appeals.

The 1983 case had ordered comparable pay for state government secretaries and truck drivers. This case became a model ruling for other states and localities that wanted to initiate comparable worth.

The appeals court ruled that the 1964 Civil Rights Act "does not obligate [Washington state] to eliminate an economic inequality which it did not create." This ruling was a blow to feminist groups, which used the case as a rallying point in their efforts to implement comparable worth.

—Jay Morris, Michelle Rabayda

THE BOARD ROOM

Marriott announces PEC gala at the NRA Show

Richard E. Marriott (Marriott Corp., Washington, DC), chairman of NRA's Political Education Committee (PEC), has announced that PEC will host its Second Annual Political Education Fund Gala Dinner Dance during the 67th NRA Show at the Chicago Marriott on May 17, 1986. A topflight entertainer, along the lines of last year's soloist Tony Bennett, will be the featured performer.

Proceeds from the gala will fund the NRA's efforts to better educate restaurateurs nationwide about their role in the political process. Corporate contributions are being accepted, primarily from special sponsors made up of NRA allied members and suppliers.

Marriott stated that ". . . the Political Education Fund (PEF) allows the foodservice industry to gain excellent exposure at all levels of government by sponsoring political events that bring together members of Congress and restaurateurs to promote the legislative interests of the industry. This fund allows foodservice suppliers to take an active role in promoting the legislative issues that we all 'live and die' by!"

Tickets for the Second Annual Political Education Fund Gala Dinner Dance are $250 each. For additional information, contact Tom Kelley, NRA manager of political affairs, at (800) 424-5156 or (202) 638-6100.

How does your menu stack up?

Find out with NRA's Great Menu Series.

A menu is your number one sales and marketing tool. There are literally dozens of elements of your menu that directly affect your bottom line, yet how confident are you that your menu is as successful as it could be?

From paper and typeface selection to item placement and format, your menu can serve to boost check averages and satisfy customers. To find out how your menu stacks up with some of the best menus in the industry, order one or all three of the books in *NRA's Great Menu* Series. You'll have an opportunity to examine winners from NRA's 1983, 1984 and 1985 Great Menu Contest in such categories as: Under $5.00 Menus, $5.00–$10 Menus, Over $10 Menus, Specialty Menus, Institutional Menus, Most Imaginative Menus, Best Designed Menus and more.

Menus appear in fine black and white reproductions with text highlighting the outstanding features of each entry. You will find each book in the series informative as well as entertaining.

Order the series and get hundreds of menu ideas or order each book individually for an inside look at winners for each year.

PB880, Great Menus 1983
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PB881, Great Menus 1984
64 pages, $19.95
PB882, Great Menus 1985
64 pages, $19.95
Complete three-book series $50, a $10 savings. (Include publication numbers with all orders.)

To order, include $2.50 for postage and handling PLUS tax for Wash., DC and Illinois residents. Wash., DC residents add 6% sales tax, Illinois residents add 7% sales tax, Chicago, IL residents add additional 1% sales tax, making Chicago, IL residents' sales tax 8%.
Return orders to: NRA Publications, 311 First St., NW, Washington, DC 20001

Impeciato hailed by *Atlanta* magazine

Atlanta, the monthly city magazine of Atlanta, GA, recently hailed NRA Director Victor J. Impeciato (Vittorio's, Atlanta, GA) as one of the 50 people who make Atlanta special. In its October '85 issue, *Atlanta* called Impeciato "Mr. Restaurant" and "the voice of the restaurant industry in Atlanta for years when no one else was out there fighting."

In their month-long search to find Atlantans who make a difference, two *Atlanta* reporters contacted the heads of community organizations, educators, politicians and representatives from the public and private sectors for nominations. From this list they culled 50 people who, in their opinion, embody the spirit of Atlanta. "If a metropolis can be said to have a spirit," they said, "these are the folks who provide the heart."

Royal receives minority small business person of year award

NRA Honorary Director Ernest H. Royal (Ernie's at Royal's Hearthside, Rutland, VT) was recently honored as minority small business person of the year by the Vermont Small Business Administration (SBA) Advisory Council.

According to Christopher Barbieri, chairman of the Vermont SBA Advisory Council and executive vice president of the Vermont State Chamber of Commerce, Royal was singled out by the SBA for his achievements as a restaurateur and contributions to the community.

"Ernie typifies the consummate small businessman in this state," Barbieri said. "He and his wife started out with a lot of enthusiasm and little financial resources and went on to create a very successful restaurant in Rutland. That, coupled with the fact that he has devoted a great deal of time and effort to volunteer organizations in his community and at the state level, makes him an exceptional candidate to receive this award."

In addition to serving on the NRA Board and assuming an active role in Board activities, Royal has been a member of the Vermont SBA Advisory Council for the past 10 years. He is past president and director of the Rutland region restaurant association, director of the Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce and the Chittenden Bank and trustee of the Culinary Institute of America.

Earlier honors to come Royal's way were the Citizen of the Year award by the Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce in 1982 and the Vermont Restaurateur of the Year award in 1984.

-Dorothy Dee

IN SEARCH OF YOUR RESTAURANT'S IMAGE

by Maurice P. Minno

Hardly a week goes by when I don't receive several calls from restaurateurs who feel that their restaurant should be more popular and have a more profitable sales volume. When I meet with such restaurateurs, I like to ask them to describe their restaurant's image. Often the response is, "I don't really know."

What is a restaurant image? . . .

Your restaurant's image is the impression that the restaurant conveys either directly or indirectly to others. The image is a result of everything you have done in creating and perpetuating the business.

Impressions of your restaurant are formed by your regular customers, the general public, your employees, the industry (critics, hospitality publications, other restaurateurs, etc.) and your purveyors. How they view your restaurant image may be very different from your perception. That is why you must divorce yourself emotionally from the restaurant and understand the image your restaurant creates for "significant others."

Restaurant image builders . . .

Each restaurant is different yet each creates, either successfully or unsuccessfully, atmospheric and personality factors that affect its image. These factors are the builders of a restaurant's image. Every physical feature that creates an emotional effect on those in the restaurant influences the atmosphere. A restaurant's personality is created by the staff, operational characteristics and voiced perceptions of customers and critics. Here is a sampling of typical restaurant image builders.

Atmospheric image builders

- *Location/neighborhood*—convenience, accessibility and safety.
- *Restaurant size and layout*, including degree of intimacy/privacy, creature comforts, functionality, acoustics, table distribution, etc.
- *All physical features of the interior appointments*, including quality, sophistication/elegance and physical condition; textures and colors; coordinated impact; uniqueness; special touches, etc.
- *Tabletop appointments/table settings*, including quality, functionality, appropriateness, overall effect, special touches
- *The building's exterior appearance*, exterior graphic features, such as signs, lighting, displays
- *Interior graphics*, such as design and appearance of menu, paper napkins, matches and so forth
- *Lighting effects* and
- *Cleanliness/housekeeping*.

Personality image builders

- *Service*—type, scope, timeliness; attitude, efficiency, alertness, professionalism, uniqueness, specialization, formality of staff
- *Employees*—personality, uniform appearance, grooming
- *Personalities/reputations of key staff members*, such as owner, chef, maitre d', sommelier, etc.
- *Food and beverages served*—quality (temperature, appearance, flavor blending, portions, etc.), consistency, ingredient quality and freshness, price/value perception, recognized specialties, creativity, variety, complexity, and sensitivity to trends
- *Food and beverage menu*—the type and scope of menu(s) offered; price structure and range; item descriptions; overall condition and appearance, such as cleanliness, tastefulness, etc.
- *Merchandising*—plate presentations, "specials"
- *Operating days and hours*
- *Entertainment*—scope, type, variety
- *Special characteristics*, such as coat handling; rest room appointments and supplies; valet parking; wine tastings; cooking classes; catering—type, scope, and quality, etc.
- *Current customers' profile*
- *Restaurant reviews/publicity*
- *Guide ratings* (i.e., Mobile Travel Guide, Michelin Guide, Holiday Travel Awards, etc.) and
- *Community support and involvement*.

Determining your restaurant's image . . .

An analysis of your restaurant's operations is necessary for discovering your restaurant's image. The intent of such an analysis is to identify your restaurant's specific strengths and weaknesses and potential problems and/or opportunities. Such an analysis entails observing production and service during all meal periods on different days of the week, selectively interviewing current and former customers and determining potential markets in your trade area as well as constructing a profile of current customers and your competitors. Also important is an impartial review of your restaurant's exterior and interior design.

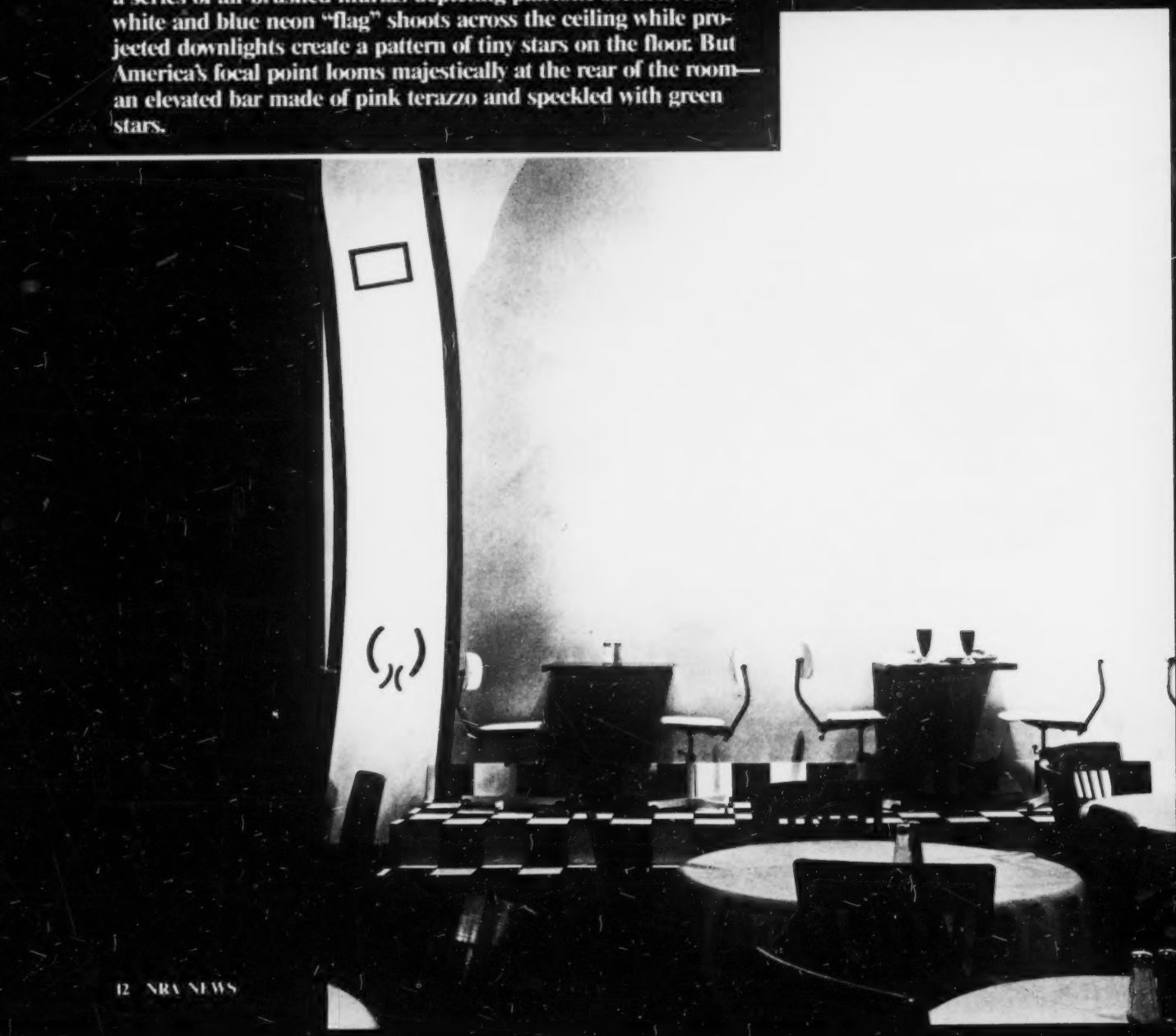
The findings from the analysis will lead you to conclusions on operational problems that are inhibiting sales and require corrective action. The findings also will pinpoint opportunities for more effectively positioning your restaurant in the trade area. ❑

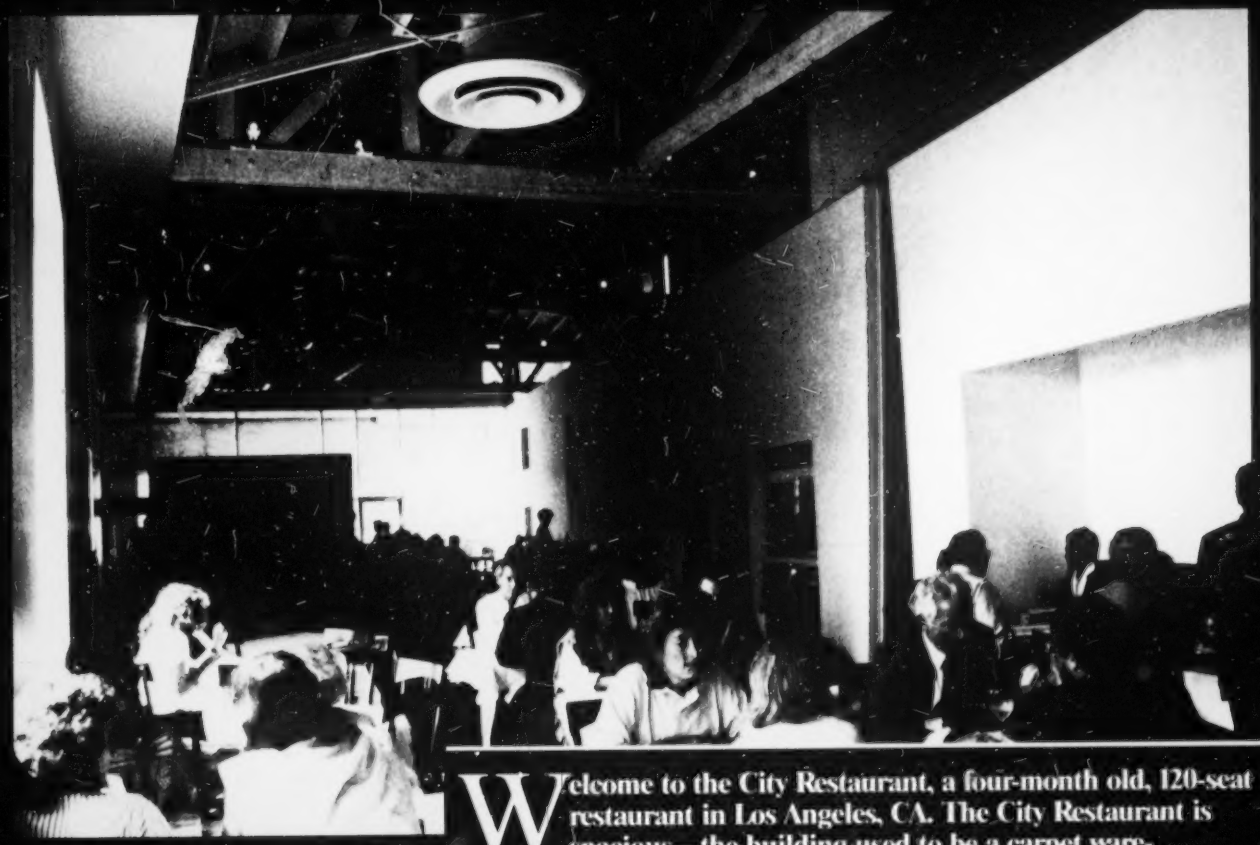
Maurice P. Minno is a principal of MDR Associates in Fairfax, Virginia, a professional hospitality consulting firm, specializing in restaurant operations, restaurant development, menu development and kitchen design.

RESTAURANT DESIGN
Finding the Right Look

by Anne Papa

Welcome to America, a 350-seat restaurant opened a year ago in New York City. Your first impression is one of size—10,000 square feet of undivided space. The walls are a series of air-brushed murals depicting patriotic scenes. A red, white and blue neon "flag" shoots across the ceiling while projected downlights create a pattern of tiny stars on the floor. But America's focal point looms majestically at the rear of the room—an elevated bar made of pink terazzo and speckled with green stars.





Welcome to the City Restaurant, a four-month old, 120-seat restaurant in Los Angeles, CA. The City Restaurant is spacious—the building used to be a carpet warehouse—but your first impression is not of size but rather of its clean, industrial design. Stark white walls are unadorned with paintings or pictures; the restaurant's color comes from the olive green floor, the ox-blood red chairs and the black terazzo bar "lit" from within by bright, orange-yellow walls. Exposed industrial beams and lighting on the ceiling reflect the City Restaurant's warehouse roots.

Restaurateurs from New York to Los Angeles are recognizing that the way their restaurants look can mean the difference between success or failure. Says Michael Weinstein, owner of America, "Quality of food and service remain the most important aspects in my restaurant. But today's customers have higher expectations regarding setting and ambiance. Dining out has become not only an eating experience but a visual experience as well."

Consequently, operators are challenged to identify and then develop "the look" that will draw customers into their restaurants. The most celebrated designs in the country today are the result of a *collaborative* effort between restaurateur and designer. Together, operators and designers are developing looks that are, as one New York designer observes, "approaching the edge of design as never before. The only trend we are noting in restaurant design today is the overwhelming effort to be unique."

Finding the look that fits your concept . . .

The first step in the development of a successful design is to identify your

Chaya Brasserie, Los Angeles, CA

operation's *concept*. By having a firm grasp on the image you intend to convey, you can develop the design that will best promote that image.

David Kellen, partner in the Los Angeles architectural firm Schweitzer-Kellen, which designed the City Restaurant, believes that this step in the design process benefits operators in all aspects of their business. "Whether an owner is developing a new concept or reworking an old concept, it helps to sit down in the beginning and clearly outline what he or she hopes to achieve," he says.

With a well-defined concept in hand, you and your designer are ready to consider the many factors that will make the look of your restaurant distinctively your own.

Location. As demonstrated by the contrast between the City Restaurant and America, current design trends are multi-faceted. If a common denominator does exist, many designers agree that it is geographical. That is, the city or town a restaurant is located in says a lot about how that restaurant will look.

For instance, David Kellen of the City Restaurant says the look of that restaurant is a reflection of the "new excitement in California about fresh ingredients and creative cooking. Our design is intended to showcase that. At the City Restaurant, the design serves as a backdrop to the food and the people."

Across the country, a newly-opened restaurant in New York's Greenwich Village called Baton's (200 seats) integrates spray-painted walls, flashy mannequins and "lightning bolts" zigzagging through the ceiling. "Baton's is fast-paced, dazzling—attributes often applied to people who live in Manhattan," explains Baton's designer Sam Lopata.

Further north, Restaurant Jasper (Boston, MA; 80 seats) achieves a softer look with pastels, art work and plenty of fresh flowers. "Bostonians tend to be more conservative," reflects owner Jasper White. "We bypass many new trends in favor of an established, classic design."

Of course, sweeping generalizations go against the fundamental, creative nature of design. But it is clear that regional influences have a direct effect on design trends. And not only is the city you are located in an influential factor, but where you operate within your city should be considered as well. For instance, when the Chicago, IL-based Levy Organization leased space to open an upscale establishment called Spiaggia (133 seats) they wanted to make the most of their lakeside location. Architect Joel Meisel came up with a multi-tiered seating design that provided as many patrons as possible with a spectacular view. Similarly, Carol Bloom, co-owner of Windows (Arlington, VA; 200 seats) says the restaurant's subtle art deco touches, muted colors and recessed lighting were designed specifically so as not to compete with Windows' commanding view of Washington, DC's monuments.

Clientele. The customers you hope to attract—your target market—must also be figured into the "drawing board" stage of your design. Will your restaurant be a gathering place for singles, a bastion for the business lunch crowd or a haven for families? Your design should be developed to suit your clientele.

At America, Michael Weinstein knew from the beginning that his new restaurant had the potential to attract Manhattan's young professionals. Even the America theme, he says, was created to "reflect a new spirit of patriotism" evident among young people today. Accordingly, many elements of America's design are intended to appeal to a fast-paced "yuppie" clientele. (See the Oct. 1985 issue of ***NRA NEWS*** for article on yuppie spending patterns.)

Most of the tables in the restaurant are large and round, leaving plenty of room for a newcomer to "pull up a chair and join the group." A wide aisle, stretching from the reception area to the bar, creates an impression of movement and spotlights people as they enter. The elevated bar and raised tables at the room's perimeter provide patrons with a view of the entire restaurant. "People love to see and be seen," maintains America designer Libby McClintock. "A customer standing at the bar knows he is in the right place because he can tell at a glance that everyone else is there, too."

Menu. The type of food you will be serving could also inspire exciting directions in your design.

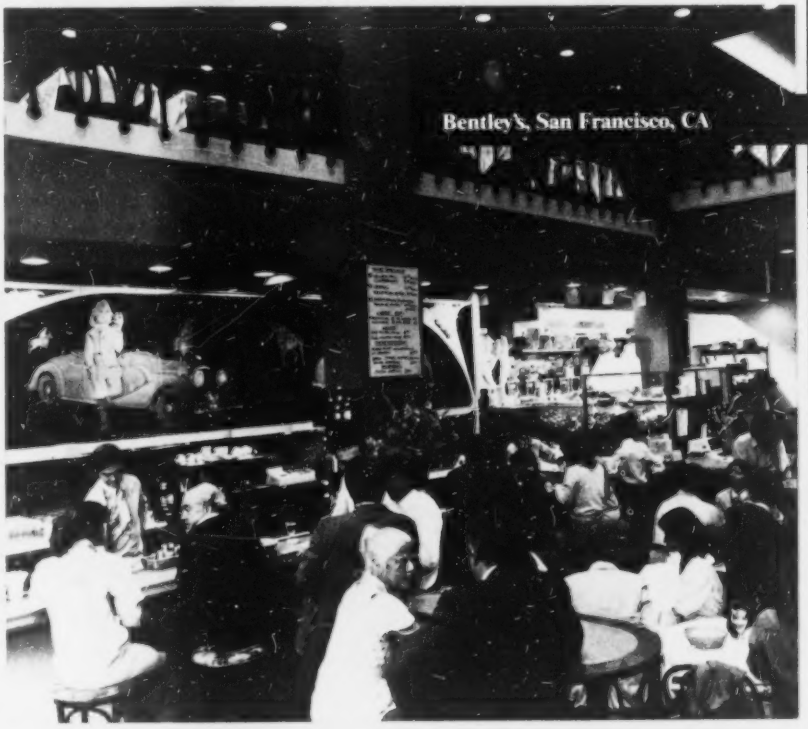
One operator's experience

Doing it on your own

"I guess you could call me a visionary," says Jo Policastro, managing partner of Bentley's Oyster Bar & Restaurant, a 96-seat restaurant which opened last year in San Francisco, CA. "At any rate, I know what I like. I can look at a dark, dingy space and in my mind's eye create a total concept, complete with colors, textures—even down to what type of chairs and tables to use." Unlike many operators who engage professional designers to develop their restaurant's "look," Policastro was the primary design force behind Bentley's.

Bentley's operates adjacent to and in affiliation with San Francisco's Galleria Park Hotel. So Policastro's aim in designing the restaurant was to develop a look that complimented the hotel but was also reminiscent of an East Coast oyster bar, in the tradition of New York's Grand Central Station Oyster Bar & Grill. "That bar is known far and wide as 'the common man's greatest seafood house in America' ", explains Policastro. "In my restaurant, I wanted to combine that traditional feeling with an upscale, chic ambiance."

One visit to Bentley's, and it is obvious that Policastro accomplished what she set out to achieve. Traditional materials, such as tile, wood and zinc, are combined with contemporary touches such as etched glass and inset lighting. The illuminated oyster bar is elevated (an idea Policastro developed after admiring the raised sushi bar at New York's Cafe Seiyoken). The Bentley's name is best represented in a sand-blasted, etched glass mural behind the bar which "depicts the good life"—polo players, a beautiful woman sipping champagne and a gleaming Bentley automobile, circa *The Great Gatsby* and the 1920s.



Bentley's, San Francisco, CA

At Chaya Brasserie (120 seats, Los Angeles, CA), designers Jeffrey Daniels and Elyse Grinstein developed a look that complements the restaurant's menu. The food served at Chaya Brasserie is an exotic combination of Japanese and European cuisines, with an emphasis on French and Italian dishes. Therefore, just as East meets West on the menu, so do they meet in the design. The focal point of the restaurant is a bamboo garden atrium in the center, framed in raw white pine and ascending through a skylight in the ceiling—reminiscent of bamboo gardens in the Orient. Surrounding the atrium are tables covered with butcher paper, tilted mirrors, indirect lighting and wood panelling—elements typically found in a French or Italian brasserie.

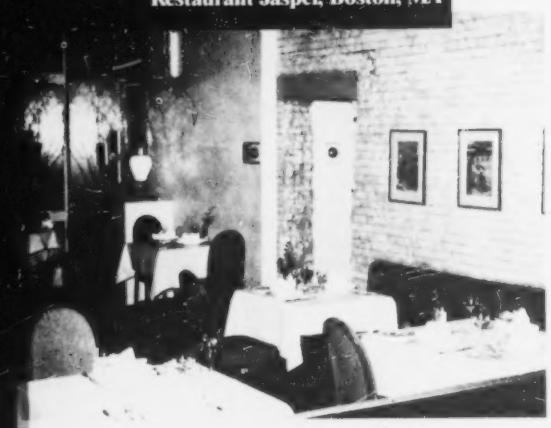
Theme. Finally, if your restaurant has a stated theme—be it historic, ethnic or eclectic—your design should naturally reflect that theme. In some cases, it takes no more than an unusual name to spark a slew of creative design ideas.

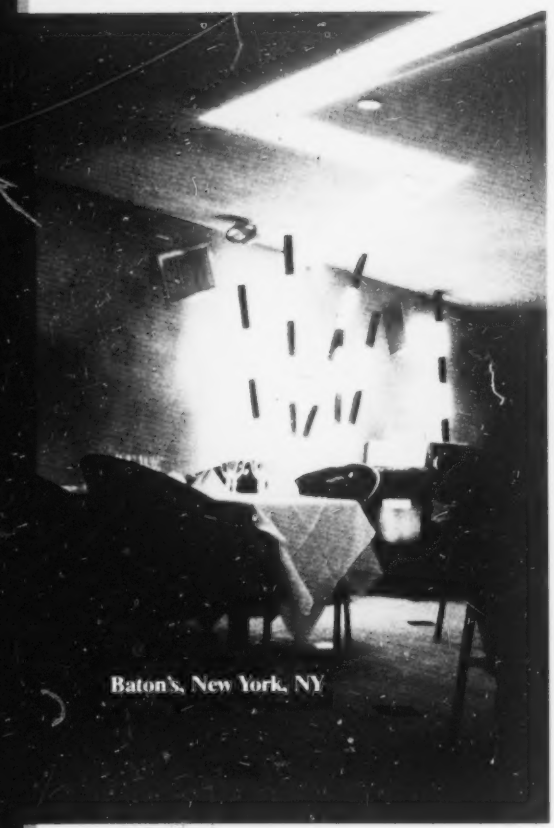
Such was the case when New York designer Sam Lopata was approached by a prospective restaurateur who wanted to open a new Chinese restaurant—Pig Heaven. "I really had my work cut out for me," laughs Lopata, "particularly since the prevailing attitude was that only a serious, sophisticated atmosphere could make it in New York." But Lopata parlayed the whimsical name into a whimsical design, complete with a barn-like structure, pigs chasing each other about the walls and ceiling, and two wooden pigs out front displaying menus. Observes Lopata, "By not fighting the playful nature of the concept, we created an incredible ambiance. You can't help but smile when you walk into Pig Heaven."

The design process: a team effort . . .

Once you have determined the factors to incorporate into your design, you are ready to begin the design process. You and your designer both play a crucial role in every step of that process—as innovators, decision-makers and "watchdogs" over one another—supporting each other's strengths but also checking each other's excesses. For example, as an operator you are more in tune with the day-to-day practicalities of running a restaurant than a designer ever can be. Therefore, even the best designers will rely on you to reject or modify ideas that will interfere with your restaurant's functions. Says Michael Weinstein, "Architects and designers tend to create in an unreal

Restaurant Jasper, Boston, MA





Baton's, New York, NY

world. For instance, in the America project, use of lasers and other new types of lighting were proposed. But they were impractical, not to mention potentially unsafe."

Occasionally, a logistical problem presented by an operational need can result in a creative design element not otherwise considered. At the City Restaurant, co-owner Mary Sue Milliken recalls that one criterion she established with designers Josh Schweitzer and David Kellen was that plenty of space was needed for the kitchen. In the final design, one end of the kitchen was longer than the other, cutting into Schweitzer and Kellen's space allotment for the dining room. So the designers modified their original plan by building a diagonal wall through the restaurant, providing space in the kitchen where it was needed.

As an operator, you are also more aware of budget constraints which a designer, caught up in his/her creative zeal, may overlook. Similarly, you are better able to identify which design elements should take priority and which can be completed later on. Monique Hooker, owner of Monique's Cafe (Chicago, IL; 100 seats), opened her restaurant two years ago on a strict budget. "We couldn't do everything we wanted right away," she recalls. Consequently, the designer she commissioned created the "high tech" clean look Hooker desired—but only to a point. "The restaurant was designed to accommodate 100 people, but when we opened we only sat 50," Hooker explains. "Even in the kitchen, we had outlets put in where equipment would someday be." Only after the restaurant opened and became successful was the original design completed.

On the other hand, a professional designer contributes expertise, intimate knowledge of design trends and objectivity. Objectivity is key, for one of the biggest problems many operators have is the inability to differentiate between personal tastes and what may actually work best.

Furthermore, a truly innovative designer may challenge you to take risks with your design—to go further out on a limb than you may have gone otherwise. When Boston designer George Timsett first suggested to Jasper White of Restaurant Jasper that the dining room's brick walls be treated a little differently, White was hesitant. Timsett's proposal was this: to sponge paint the bricks, using a combination of watered-down pastel paints to create a soft, high-lighted effect. White's inclination was to "play it safe" by using one solid color on the bricks. So Timsett did one wall as a test. White was delighted with the result. "The mix on the walls makes every other color in the room stand out that much more," he says.

Design elements to consider . . .

When you and your designer work together to create and develop your design, there are many factors to consider. These are some of the basics:

Colors. The colors you use say a lot about your image. For instance, at New York City's Batons, the absence of color makes a stunning impression. The entire restaurant is black, white or gray. At Windows in Arlington, VA, dusty rose and grays are used to create an elegant, sophisticated atmosphere, conducive to business lunches and quiet dinners for two (and, as mentioned, to provide a backdrop for the view). And at Spiaggia in Chicago, rose, aqua and robin's egg blue are used throughout in uninterrupted solids—again, to create an upscale impression which busy, colorful prints may not convey.

Lighting. An increased use of theatrical lighting has added a whole new dimension to restaurant design. At the City Restaurant, bowstring tresses are arranged to spotlight between tables rather than directly on them, creating a glow without hitting anyone directly in the eye. At America, lighting was used to make the big space seem bigger; lights are concealed in a hidden pocket at the rim of the ceiling just before it meets the wall. According to designer Libby McClintock, this type of lighting creates an "implied infinite space" as though ceiling and wall never meet. And at Monique's Cafe, Monique Hooker compliments her bold, industrial design with individual black lights suspended over each table.

Acoustics. Striking the right acoustical balance is a challenge that faces all restaurants. When there is too much noise, it can be jarring. When there is too much silence, it can be dull. Each restaurant must find an acoustical solution that is consistent with its concept and market. At Chaya Brasserie in Los Angeles, for example, the high noise level is considered an asset because "it contributes to the authentic, hustle bustle at-

Monique's Cafe, Chicago, IL

mosphere of a true European brasserie," according to assistant manager Tom Cardenas. But at Timbers Charhouse Restaurant (Chicago, IL; 230 seats) noise was a problem when the restaurant opened last fall. Because a great deal of wood was used in floors, ceiling and walls to give the restaurant the appearance of a hunting lodge, the acoustics were terrible. Recalls owner Jim Errant, "Customers were saying to me, 'I love the look, I love the food, but I won't be back because I can't hear myself think.' " The problem was quickly remedied, with small sound regulators hung from the ceiling and acoustical tiles.

Open/closed kitchen. Open kitchens are seen more and more often in restaurants across the country. "Today's customers are better educated about food. They are excited about preparation methods and new ingredients. Therefore, an open kitchen becomes a form of education and entertainment," speculates Errant.

Of course, open kitchens may not be suitable for all establishments. At Windows, Carol Bloom feels an open kitchen would contradict the restaurant's elegant yet understated ambiance. But many operators find open kitchens to be a definite asset—even a focal point. At Monique's Cafe, glass windows providing a view of the kitchen draw attention to the fresh ingredients and innovative cooking styles used. But Monique Hooker does point out that extra attention must be paid to a kitchen's design if it is to be open. She had a large butcher block installed along one wall to soften her kitchen's appearance, and large appliances and equipment (refrigerators, etc.) are kept in the back.

Extra touches. When all is said and done, often the personal touches best reflect the uniqueness of your establishment. Windows is known for its fine, etched glass panels. At Spiaggia, customers notice an exquisite, patterned rug which hangs in the vestibule—the pattern of which is repeated in the serving platters. Monique Hooker says she softens her cafe's bold, streamlined design with fresh flowers, music and art work from nearby galleries. And at Restaurant Jasper, Jasper White pays upwards of $500 weekly to keep his establishment full of fresh-cut flowers.

But will it last? . . .

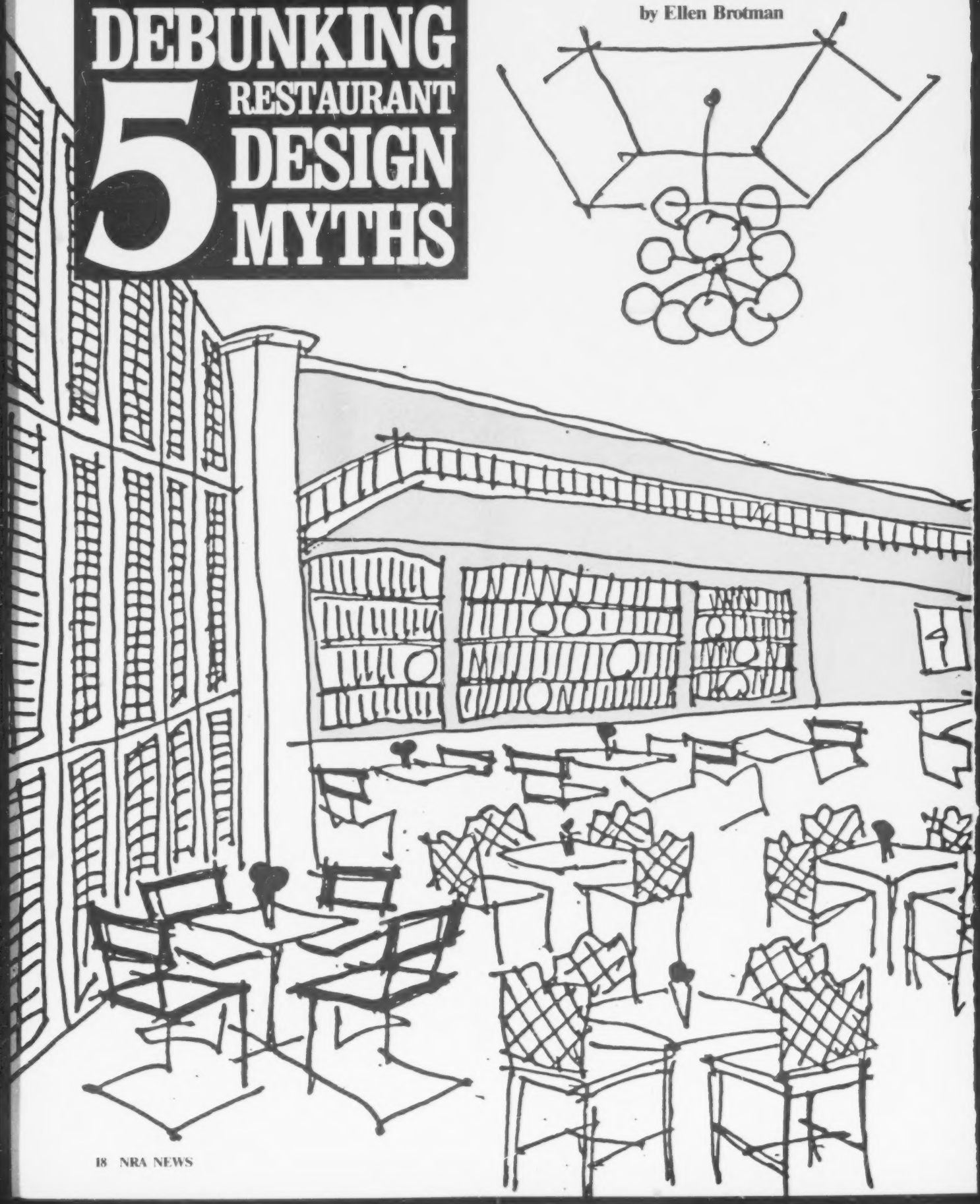
Finally, when every chair and table is in place, stand back and evaluate your design. Does it convey the image you want it to convey? Is it impressive enough so customers will comment upon entering, yet comfortable enough so they will be able to sit for two or three hours without feeling overwhelmed?

As Jim Errant of Timbers Charhouse says, "You live with a design for a long time before you even open the doors. You've seen it on the drawing board, you've seen it halfway finished, you've seen it completed. But then you open, and you realize it is not completed. Because then it belongs to your customers. They may have suggestions to make or changes to recommend."

Constant evaluation, modification and updates are a fundamental part of the design process. Keep in touch with your designer, asking him/her to come in periodically with recommendations. Stay abreast of current trends in your market area and, most importantly, listen to your customers—for their opinions will determine the staying power of your design. ❑

DEBUNKING 5 RESTAURANT DESIGN MYTHS

by Ellen Brotman



Common design myths are often based on fabled or hand-me-down "shoulds" or "shouldn'ts" instead of proven nuts-and-bolts design principles. Let's explore five of the more common design myths.

Ellen Brotman is president of Ellen I. Brotman Interior Designs, Inc. in Fairfax, VA, specializing in restaurant interior design and individual consultation.

Myth 1 Pink is for girls and blue is for boys.

We have all been told that "pink is for girls, and blue is for boys." The good news about this myth as related to restaurant design is that for the most part it has self-destructed. Indeed pink (or more agreeably "mauve" or "rose") is a very popular choice today in many restaurant interiors. In truth, color has no sex link or predisposition. Very often eliminating color options you assume are too "feminine" or "masculine" is eliminating a wide range of possible selections. It would be best to base your color choices on the desired image or mood. Indeed, there are many fresh and innovative colors that are just waiting to be used.

Myth 2 You should use only one style of chair throughout the dining room.

This myth seems to harken back to the matching set syndrome most notably found in homes—that is, the coordinating bedroom suite combining the exact style headboard, dresser, night tables, chest of drawers and lamps. In restaurant dining rooms, especially those having a large, open, single-leveled space, the use of only one chair style can produce a rather monotonous visual effect.

More interesting combinations could include a mixture of chairs from the same period but of a different style or groupings of fully upholstered chairs along with lighter, more open-framed varieties. In addition to visually enhancing the environment, this eclectic grouping would also give the diner a choice of seating. Again, there are no "shoulds" or "shouldn'ts" that apply there. It really boils down to breaking old habits and trying something new.

Myth 3 "Because Harry's Bar and Grill has been in business for 200 years, we should make our restaurant look like his."

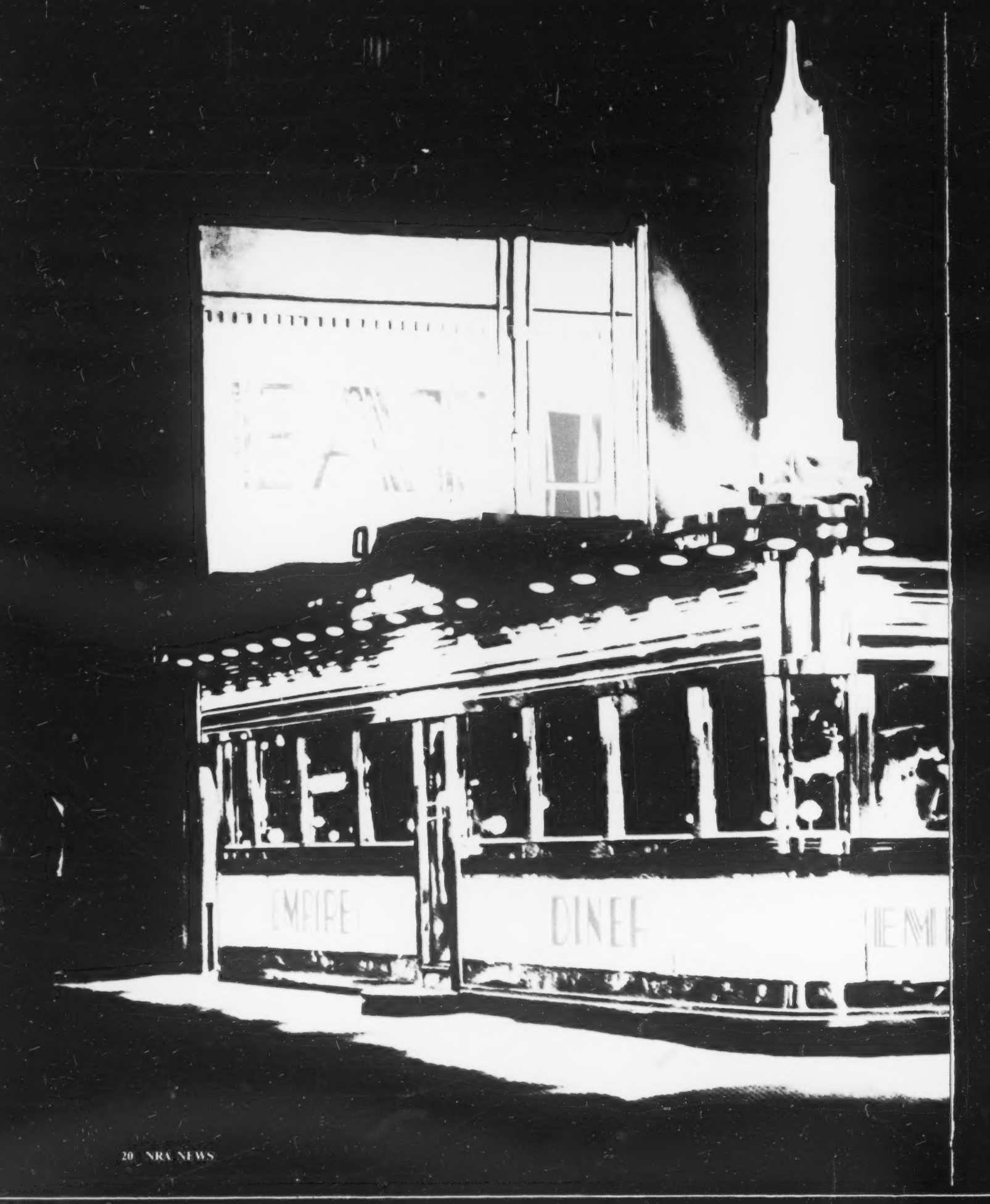
During initial brainstorming sessions, clients often bring me pictures of favorite restaurant interiors, hoping to achieve the same design. While this is an appropriate tool to establish the image or ambiance of a new space, exact duplication can turn out to be a terrible disappointment. Just because a design has been successfully used in a particular property does not mean that it is a sure bet for every other space. Harry's Bar and Grill may work wonderfully in a downtown urban setting but probably will not draw customers in a suburban shopping center. Instead of trying to duplicate another restaurant interior, it is best to assess your own property in terms of location, market, mood and, most importantly, projected budget.

Myth 4 "I'll finish accessorizing after the restaurant opens."

This never happens. During the first few weeks after opening, there are simply too many other problems to deal with. So the bare walls or empty corners tend to remain as they are. Or, even worse, accessory items are purchased haphazardly, just to fill up the space. Unless you get lucky, these items will probably not be the most well-suited appointments. Maybe the very word "accessory" is the root of the problem here—the implication being that accessories are an addition or accompaniment to the overall design. In fact, accessory items are an integral part of an interior space and truly reflect the character and image of the design package. That is why they need to be selected, budgeted for and purchased along with all the other furnishings.

Myth 5 Furnishing selections should always echo the same period as the interior architecture.

Every so often a restaurateur is fortunate enough to find a building of historic integrity, such as an old train station, mill or foundry, that can be renovated and made into a restaurant. The obvious choice of furnishings would be to select from the same period as the particular interior architecture. But there are options. For example, incorporating some classical contemporary furnishings and graphics into an old mill equipped with beamed ceilings and pegged wood floors would actually point out and highlight the interior architecture. The reverse also would work. Given a sleek contemporary structure with pitched ceilings and glass walls, the inclusion of elegant antiques and classical appointments would add warmth and interest and more importantly, a human scale. Indeed, mixing the old with the new can produce a most desirable and long-lasting effect. ❑


EMPIRE
DINER

Restaurant Signs
A 24-Hour Invitation

by Cecelia Niepold

Imagine a weary traveler, hungry and tired, scanning Route 1 in Saugus, MA, for an inviting place to enjoy a meal. Suddenly he spies a seven-story high, brightly lit cactus with the words "Hilltop Steak House" in ruby red neon. In just six seconds (the average time a motorist traveling 55 m.p.h. has to read a sign) the sign has done its job. By communicating both the restaurant's location and its country western motif, the sign has successfully attracted another hungry customer.

"If you can make your place stand out, if people notice it and it looks appealing, they will turn in," says Robert Walker, president of Orgal American Displays, Inc. in Westmont, IL. "Approximately 85 percent of all shopping is based on impulse buying."

How signs can work for you . . .

Signs are your most visible means of communication. They tell customers who you are, where you are and what you sell. Well-designed signs should be more than just basic information boards. When used creatively, they can complement your restaurant's specific needs, effectively market your concept and, most importantly, make your establishment stand out from the crowd. Here are several ways in which signs can enhance your operation.

Convey image. Each restaurant has its own unique personality. A well-designed sign projects that special image. That first impression is crucial—it is what convinces customers to visit your establishment.

Signs can communicate image in a variety of ways. For instance, effective usage of sign and type design successfully conveys two separate identities under one roof at Chianti in Los Angeles, CA. Chianti, a well-established classic Italian restaurant (seats), now operated by the Saga Corporation, recently opened a new concept, Cucina ("kitchen" in Italian), right next door. The 40-seat operation, echoing its name, features an open kitchen that serves both establishments. While Chianti is a formal, elegant and dimly-lit restaurant favored for its subdued ambiance, Cucina is bright and lively.

The exterior signage reflects the differences between the two operations. A traditional awning graces the original Chianti, while the new

Cucina features bright open windows. A large version of the original Chianti logo shines above both store fronts, tying the two concepts together.

The Clam Box, a 75-seat operation that has been serving fried clams for 50 years in Ipswich, MA, communicates its image differently. The building itself is the actual sign because it is shaped like a traditional clam box. Says owner Theodore Aggelakis, "People can tell from the building exactly what we serve."

Smaller design shapes can also effectively convey identity. For Stars, a 140-seat restaurant in San Francisco, using a bright star in its sign was a natural step. The word "Stars" in glowing green neon script is highlighted by a vibrant gold star in the center which takes the place of the "A." The image is also used throughout the restaurant. The gold star logo brightens the restaurant's sophisticated black and gray menu and small stars dot the lush green carpet.

Change image. Signs can also help restaurateurs communicate a change in image. New signage is the most effective way to let customers know something is different inside. Changes can be simple, such as new type and color, or a total revision for a dramatic new look.

When John Glisson wanted to update his 400-seat Johnny's 83 Club, a country western entertainment complex in Chicago, IL, he made the transition in two stages to gradually communicate his new image and avoid frightening away established customers.

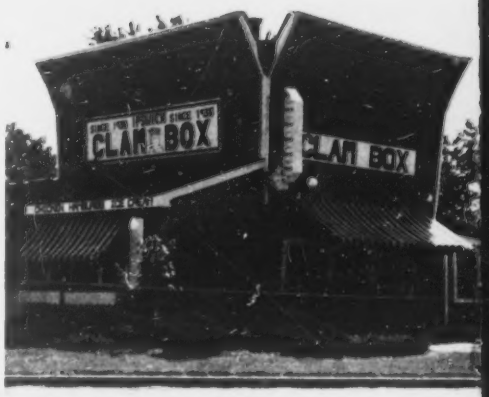
The first step, Johnny's These Days, operated for a year and a half. It blended the country and modern look by keeping the word "Johnny's" from the original country-looking sign and adding "These Days" in a jazzy modern type. Similar yellows and browns also tied the two signs together.

When Glisson was ready to complete the transition to Mr. Cognito's New York—a lively dining and dancing establishment with a sophisticated New York flair, he changed the sign to a silhouette of a man in a hat and sunglasses and changed the color to burgundy.

"The signs played a big part in helping me make the change because they reflected the interior changes," explains Glisson. "Quite a few people have gone along with us and put up their cowboy boots."

The 463-unit Sizzler chain based in Los Angeles, CA, simply changed the copy and colors on its signs to convey a broadened image. Traditionally a steak-oriented restaurant, the chain has added seafood and salads and brightened its interior. To communicate the new focus, the trademark cows were eliminated and the words "Family Steak House" were substituted by "Steak, Seafood and Salad." And to reflect the more upscale image the colors were changed from red and purple to more subdued browns.

Another steakhouse, the 585-unit Dayton, OH-based Ponderosa chain, has also used signage to "de-wester-



The Clam Box in Ipswich, MA, shows that buildings can be effective signs.

A look at some signage trends

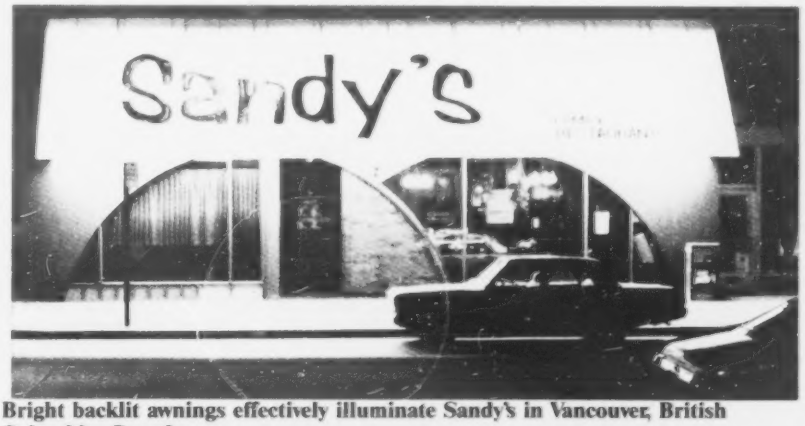
Innovations are making signage increasingly effective.

Backlit awnings are one of the "hottest" trends in the sign industry today, according to Jerry Swormstedt, publisher of the *Signs of the Times* magazine. An evolution of traditional awnings, these new awnings are brightly lit to project colorful artwork and copy actually printed on the awning. "They work because the fabric and steel sculpture becomes three dimensional," explains Dave Marshall, sales manager for Ancient Mariner Industries, a firm in Seattle, WA, and Canada that manufactures and designs backlit awnings.

The advantages of backlit awnings are many: they often cost less per square foot than traditional electric signs; they are not as restricted by sign codes; and, because they can soften a building's hard lines, they are very appealing. They are fairly inexpensive to change and can be adapted to fit many different situations.

For instance, the Fraser Arms Hotel in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, used backlit awnings to draw attention to its three restaurant concepts. Facing out on a dark parking lot, none of the restaurants was noticeable. Backlit awnings were created to reflect each operation's personality (a pub, a cabaret and a white tablecloth restaurant) with different sizes, shapes and type designs. Now the restaurants jump out; each is distinctly illuminated.

Neon. Although neon was born in the 1900s and matured in the 1950s,



Bright backlit awnings effectively illuminate Sandy's in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

nize" and update its image. Simple, rich burgundy copy (to maintain the quality meat image), highlighted by green and beige accents (to convey freshness) has replaced the familiar "branded" look of the original yellow and brown signage. Above the copy, three silhouettes of pine trees project the outdoorsy yet fresh new image. To reinforce the new look, the pine trees will be used as a small motif throughout the interior.

Improve poor location. If your restaurant is off the beaten path, a well-designed, well-lit sign can alert customers to your presence and communicate your restaurant's personality.

There are many ways to creatively enhance a less-than-perfect location. For instance, located amidst towering buildings in Manhattan, the Empire Diner, an 80-seat art deco diner, boasts a brightly lit five-foot-tall reproduction of the Empire State Building on its roof. The sign effectively communicates the diner's location as well as its name. At night, the light from the miniature Empire State Building lights up the word "EAT" printed in big bold art deco letters on the building wall next door—further advertising the diner's presence.

Recognition. Sometimes a sign can take on its own personality and become so familiar that people recognize it immediately. This kind of asso-

Typical monthly costs of various advertising media

Media	Cost per thousand
On-site sign	$ .06
Outdoor billboards	$ .56
TV advertising	$1.34
Newspaper advertising	$1.47
Radio advertising	$2.90

**Cost per thousand exposures in a community of approximately 130,000*

Source: *Signs and Your Business*, U.S. Business Administration, Claus & Claus, 1976.

designers are again using touches of neon to add sparkle and flash.

For instance, Cafe Colorado, a new 150-seat restaurant in Santa Monica, CA, effectively combines a thin slash of neon on top of big bold letters in its sign to convey the restaurant's bright modern image. Because the restaurant is an off-shoot of a well-established area restaurant, Le Dome, the owners wanted to create a more casual and up-to-date atmosphere at the cafe. The simple neon design clearly projects the cafe's lively ambiance.

Creative usage of neon conveys a bright modern image at Cafe Colorado in Santa Monica, CA.

Color is being used more creatively. Innovative color design has effectively made two signs out of one for the 377-unit Red Lobster chain based in Orlando, FL. During the day, the simple design, a bright red lobster surrounded by blue waves, is framed by a clean, white background—communicating a fresh, friendly lunch-time look. At night, however, the white background disappears (it is opaque, light does not penetrate), and the colors jump out with a neon-like intensity. The image suddenly becomes exciting and vibrant—suggesting an enticing night-time gathering place.

Building design. "We use the building's architecture, as well as its signage, as a signaling device to communicate certain values to customers," explains Martin Roberts, vice president of retail designs at Landor Associates, a strategic design and marketing firm in New York, NY.

For instance, when re-designing Red Lobster's look, Landor Associates also strongly emphasized building design. To convey a friendly, seaside ambiance, the exterior wood was stained a light gray and a blue canvas awning with crisp white piping was added at the front door. The signature widow's walk was brightly illuminated to emphasize the integrated look and make the building stand out more effectively.

Decorator panels can be attached to the exterior of a building. At Xian, a fledgling four-unit Chinese fast food chain based in Westmont, IL, 5′ by 5′ panels shaped like Chinese symbols have been added to the building's exterior.

Changeable sign boards, though not a new medium, are being increasingly used to pique customer interest. Because they are usually installed under a restaurant's major sign and announce daily specials or new products, they offer valuable flexibility. At Ryan's Family Steakhouses, a 53-unit Greenville, SC-based chain, a new food bar featuring hot and cold entrees as well as salads was introduced with one simple phrase on the sign boards: "Now Featuring the World's Most Unique Food Bar." No other advertising was used; but according to Mark McCall, vice president and chief operating officer, none was necessary. "Sales are up 35 percent chainwide as a result of the notice on the sign boards."

Here is how two restaurant chains changed their signage to convey new images. Ponderosa (Dayton, OH) has "de-westernized" and updated its look with new colors, while Red Lobster (Orlando, FL) has broadened its appeal with bright signage that conveys different day-time and night-time images.

ciation is invaluable advertising. Although every sign should strive for this "landmark status," sometimes it just happens.

That was the case with MacDonald's arches. Although today the golden arches are known far and wide as the MacDonald Corporation's symbol, this was a fortunate coincidence. The arches were part of the MacDonald brothers' original building design and were incorporated as the chain's logo only after Ray Kroc realized how closely people associated the arches with the restaurants.

Soony Dejavichitiert, co-owner of the 72-seat Thai Taste in Washington, DC, also inherited a symbol when he bought his restaurant: a striking neon art deco sign. Even though the neon is an unlikely choice for an Oriental restaurant, Dejavichitiert decided to incorporate it into his restaurant after receiving numerous letters from neighbors asking him to keep it. "I'm happy we did because everyone knows the sign," he explains.

Signs are cost effective . . .

Not only are signs versatile communicators, they are also the most cost effective way to advertise your concept. According to the Institute of

Pitfalls to avoid

Don't underestimate your sign's importance. Sometimes owners forget about their signage or take it for granted. "It doesn't matter how good your food is if you can't get customers to come in the door," reminds Andrew Bertucci, president of Andrew Bertucci Associates, a design consulting firm in Bristol, PA. "Most restaurateurs don't realize how many potential customers walk by and don't come in because they haven't been invited."

Don't let your customers get bored with your signs. Signs, like anything else, can become outdated. Take a good look at your sign. If you are bored with it, customers may be too. "After a few years habituation sets in, people don't even see the sign anymore," explains Bertucci. "Updating a sign usually creates a considerable influx of new customers," he says. Many companies change their signage every six or seven years.

Don't update your image halfway. If you update your image, don't forget to include your signage in the change. Customers won't realize something has changed unless you tell them. Exterior signage is the most effective way to indicate something is new. Remember that sign changes do not have to be major to alert customers. Sometimes a simple change in type style or color will do the trick.

Don't turn your back on legibility. Sometimes a design will look good on paper but will not translate into a three-dimensional sign. Make sure colors contrast and typefaces are legible off the ground.

Don't forget to keep your signage in good repair. It is very important to maintain a clean, properly working sign. A burnt-out or dirty sign can imply your business isn't topnotch. Cliff King, sales manager at Cummings Signs in Columbus, OH, says, "A clean, sparkling sign is especially important for a restaurant. A dirty sign may convey a dirty kitchen."

Don't cut costs. A sign represents your business. A second-class sign may suggest you have a second-class operation. Your signage should do justice to your overall concept. A too-small or poorly designed sign does not usually save money—it costs customers because fewer people read and remember the sign.

Don't forget to check local codes. Before you decide to build a 50-foot sign, check your local sign codes. Many communities have strict restrictions regarding size, lighting and how far signs have to be set back from roadways.

Don't expect a new sign tomorrow. Signs take time to design, build and install. Phil Rimmer suggests contacting a sign company at least four months before you want a sign installed. Before meeting with a sign company, allow yourself enough time to develop your own ideas.

Signage clearly conveys two different identities under one roof at Chianti in Los Angeles, CA.

Signage Research, a basic on-premise sign costs six cents to reach every 1,000 adults. This compares very favorably with $2.90 for six one-minute radio spots per week or $1.47 for a 1¼-page weekly newspaper ad.

There are other factors, too, that contribute to the cost effectiveness of signs.

- Signs are always on the job. They promote your business 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Signs last for many years. "If you consider the cost of the sign, amortize that cost over 10 to 15 years, you realize that the cost of signage is your least expensive form of advertising," explains Robert Walker.

All this adds up to constant, consistent exposure, name recognition and image building—at a comparatively low cost.

Thai Taste in Washington, DC, has incorporated its "landmark" neon sign into its overall design.

What makes a good sign? . . .

Signs often become your signature. That is why effectively combining signage elements is crucial. Here are some pointers.

Image. Think about the impression you want to create. A well-designed sign should quickly convey your restaurant's image. As Phil Rimmer, sign specialist at Dick Newman deSigns in St. Louis, MO, explains, "A poorly designed sign can be a self-inflicted wound because it can repel the very customer you are looking for." A case in point is a midscale Mexican restaurant which lost customers because its signage conveyed an upscale dinner house image.

Exterior/location. Consider how signage will blend with the overall look of your building. According to John Connors, president of Mack Sign, Inc. in Chelsea, MA, "The best signs are in harmony with their surroundings and their building." Think about your location. A congested area may demand a striking sign while an open area may lend itself to more subdued signage.

Size. There are no ironclad rules for size. The size of your sign will depend on factors such as local sign codes, your location and the image you wish to convey. If you want to attract highway traffic, obviously you need a sign that is readable from the road. If you want to project a small, intimate eatery, an awning or small wooden sign may be more appropriate.

Lettering. Readable lettering is crucial. Consider how far away people will be when reading the sign and how fast they will be traveling. A general rule of thumb: Simple letters, without serifs or thin strikes, should be one-inch high for every 40 to 50 feet of distance between the reader and the sign. A fancy script may require letters four or five times larger.

Color. An effective color scheme is one of the most important factors in sign design. Robert Walker suggests using contrasting colors for lettering and background. He also recommends using a minimum of three colors—one for lettering, one for background and one for an accent to make it distinctive.

Color choice is also crucial. Many colors have "built-in" personalities. For instance, yellows and reds are often used for fast food signs because they are vibrant and connote movement and activity. On the other hand, blues or pale greens can convey a more relaxed image.

Continuity. Try to coordinate the sign, even if it does not include your logo, with the rest of your restaurant's image—interior, menu design, etc. This will help create a well-designed total look.

Where to go for help . . .

If you are interested in developing new signage, there are many professionals that can help. To gather general information, you may want to contact national organizations, such as the National Electric Sign Association (Alexandria, VA) or the Point-of-Purchase Advertising Institute (Ft. Lee, NJ). Many states have sign associations that may provide valuable local leads and restriction codes.

Professional sign companies or design consultants also can help you develop effective signage. Design consultants generally create logos or sign designs but do not actually make the signs. Sign companies, on the other hand, manufacture signage, and some have design capabilities as well.

To ensure you get the services you need, you may want to ask the following questions before contracting with a firm.

- How long has the company been in business?
- What are the firm's design capabilities? Do they have an in-house design team?
- Are there nearby projects you can inspect? References?
- Will the firm provide information about local sign restrictions?
- Does the firm offer maintenance services?
- How much time will it take? ❑

Analysis:

PROMISCUOUS LITIGATION

The crisis in product & service liability

America is the most litigious society on earth. In 1984, one private lawsuit was filed for every 15 Americans—up 50 percent from 1979. Today, the growth in new suits continues to outpace the population. As the number of liability suits abound and insurance rates skyrocket, businesses and professionals are revaluating their ability to offer products and services. Hit hard by this escalating spiral is the hospitality industry. Liquor liability insurance is harder and harder to come by and, even when available, insurance costs are often prohibitive. This article takes a look at this perplexing problem.*

by Steven Golob

Glenn Tanner's liquor liability insurance ran out last October. He wanted to renew, but couldn't. No one in the state of Massachusetts was offering liquor liability insurance. For Tanner, co-owner of the 65-seat Tanner's Observation Deck in New Braintree, eliminating alcohol was the only viable solution. Although the restaurant now offers more non-alcoholic mocktails, the move has taken its toll. Overall business has dropped about 20 percent.

- Ron Aspell's general insurance liability has skyrocketed more than 300 percent, jumping from $12,000 to $39,000 in just one year. To take the bite out of the increase, he has added a $1.50 per person liability surcharge to his banquet fees. Aspell, owner of the 130-seat (plus 150 banquet seats) white tablecloth Country House Restaurant in Pemberton, NJ, believes that adding a liability surcharge to menus, rather than just generally raising prices, will let customers know exactly how our "sue happy society" is affecting the restaurant industry. "If we put it on the menu for the world to see, customers may become outraged and go home and write their congressmen," he explains.
- Jim Stiegman's liquor liability insurance increased stupendously, jumping from $185 one year to $26,500. Stiegman, owner of Colonel Brook's Tavern, an 80-seat operation in Washington, DC, considers himself lucky—lucky even to get a quote from an insurance company.

Steven Golob is a free-lance writer in the Washington, DC, area.

In the nation's capital as in the rest of the country, civil court juries are considering ability to pay over culpability. They are coming up with generous judgments against the defendants with the most money, which usually means those carrying the most insurance.

Insurance companies, in turn, either are not offering product and service liability coverage to high-risk businesses or have raised significantly the cost of such coverage. Last year, restaurateurs with liquor liability insurance paid a premium increase averaging 110 percent, and some operators paid considerably more.

Stiegman complained to his city council, asking local leaders to act against irresponsible lawsuits. In December, he told the National Restaurant Association he was astonished by the frankness of one councilwoman. "My constituents look forward to the day they can sue; it's like hitting the numbers," she said.

For his part, Stiegman has gone bare—that is, he did not get the insurance. Instead, he has instituted programs at his restaurant to prevent customers from getting drunk, including a designated driver program. The programs also should limit his liability in case customers do become inebriated and then hurt a third party.

Although going bare is not the end of the world; if an operator loses a lawsuit, it could mean the end of his business. And, even if he wins, it could be costly.

Foodservice not alone . . .

It is cold comfort to those going bare or paying considerably more for coverage, but liquor liability is not the toughest insurance to get. It is second. Topping the Insurance Information Institute's list of hard-to-get insurance is coverage for companies that pose pollution risks.

After liquor liability comes coverage for day-care centers, medical malpractice insurance and high-limit coverage (above $50 million) for industrial firms. Completing the top eight, it is tough to get insurance for firms that remove asbestos from schools, for commercial fishing boats and for municipalities.

Aquaslide 'n' Dive Corp. of California, the country's largest manufacturer of swimming pool slides and diving boards, last year followed companies from other high-risk businesses into bankruptcy court. Although its income statement is still strong, Aquaslide does not have enough insurance to cover the potential awards from liability suits filed against it. Said an attorney for Aquaslide: "We wanted insurance in the worst possible way."

The worst possible way is how Acmat Corp., a Connecticut asbestos-removal firm, got $6 million in liability coverage. It paid $6 million for the insurance premium. "The policy gives us a worthless amount of protection, but we could not bid on public jobs without it," says an Acmat executive.

If democracy is an imperfect way to run a government, only better than all the other systems tried through history, then suing is an imperfect way to settle disputes. But it, too, is better than all the other known methods, from dueling to flipping coins.

Americans are litigating promiscuously . . .

The problem is, Americans are beating the system to death by litigating promiscuously.

Consider these two suits.

• A woman tries to commit suicide by locking herself in the trunk of her car, then changes her mind. She sues the automobile manufacturer because she almost died waiting nine days before somebody found her. The trunk should have opened from the inside, she contends.

• The estate of another, not-so-fortunate woman sues the maker of an electric facial sauna, charging it came with inadequate instructions. Court testimony discloses the woman was sitting in her bath, the end of the appliance's cord in one hand; with her other hand, she was washing herself in the water-filled tub. In her mouth, she held the end of an extension cord. What the instructions should have warned her, according to the estate, was that she shouldn't have brought the electrical plugs together under those circumstances.

Both cases were thrown out of court, but not before the defendants paid handsome attorneys' fees.

Consider these cases that weren't thrown out of court. And, note the generous jury award or the out-of-court settlement agreed to by the defendant in fear of a generous jury.

• A champion body-builder, running a footrace with a refrigerator strapped to his back, is injured when a strap slips. His body-building career over, he sues everyone in sight. The jury awards him $1 million.

• A burglar, trying to break into a high school, falls through a skylight which, his attorney argues, carries no warning it is unsafe. Paralyzed from the fall, the burglar gets $260,000 up front, plus $1,200 a month for 20 years, in an out-of-court settlement.

In Texas alone, a laborer was awarded $70 million after an on-the-job accident, a woman's estate won $106.8 million after she died in a car accident and another man was awarded $120 million for injuries.

Some causes of the problem . . .

Along with the settlements of big awards by juries, insurance companies are troubled by the smaller settlements they pay to keep cases out of court, either because paying the attorney fees to win the case

What you can do to protect yourself

It's nice to know, though it will not keep you out of court, that the public is on your side.

Liquor purveyors should not be held legally responsible for drunken driving accidents caused by their customers, agreed 72 percent of the 1,402 respondents to a media poll last year.

Nevertheless, a Massachusetts restaurateur, who knows that courts don't follow polls, agreed to pay $4 million to the estate of a young woman killed by one of his customers in a traffic accident.

Shortly before the customer left the restaurant, according to witnesses, he staggered to its bar and slurred: "Another one for the road."

Having the public on your side won't keep you out of court if a customer leaves your establishment inebriated, then injures a third party. However, there are precautions you can take to keep your customers sober, to keep them from driving if they do become intoxicated and to protect yourself in case you wind up in court alongside a customer.

DON'T advertise "all-you-can-drink" offers, two-for-ones, free drinks, multiple drinks or oversized drinks. You'll be advertising your irresponsibility in court.

DO

• Post signs that encourage moderate consumption of alcohol.

• Promote food that slows the consumption and absorption of alcohol, especially hors d'ouevres that are high in protein and fat, such as eggs, meat, cheese and whole milk. Although these foods have the greatest capacity to retard alcohol absorption, any food will slow down the alcohol absorption process.

• Provide alternative transportation for any departing guest who shows signs of intoxication. Offer to call a taxi, and then offer to pay for the fare if necessary; or ask a staff member to drive the guest home in the guest's car or a company car. In many cities, operators have banded together to form taxi programs.

• Institute designated driver programs. The idea is simple: One person in the party is designated as driver and served free non-alcoholic beverages.

• Explain house policy in advance to companies holding parties at your establishment.

The above tips are part of NRA's "Help Prevent Drunk Driving: A Restaurateur's Guide." The NRA also offers a three-and-one-half hour seminar for restaurant managers on alcohol awareness for servers. Many state restaurant associations present this seminar to restaurants in their regions.

Whichever program you choose, make sure your trainer is well qualified. If you find yourself on the stand as a defendant in a liquor liability suit, the plaintiff's attorney will question you closely on this point.

Also, check with the program's administrators to see if instituting the program will give you a break on your liability insurance. INA/Aetna, for instance, cuts at least 10 percent off the insurance premiums of establishments where at least 75 percent of the servers have completed alcohol awareness training.

The training is important because even experienced servers and police officers accustomed to making alcohol-related arrests tend to underestimate the degree of intoxication during its early stages.

The training will increase your servers' chances of cutting off an imbiber before he becomes a drunk, and it will increase your chances of surviving a lawsuit.

would be more costly than the settlement or for fear of what a sympathetic jury rooting for the underdog might do. "We're being nickeled and dimed to death," the head of one insurance company says.

One reason for the continuing growth in new suits is the rise in million-dollar verdicts, from one in 1962 to 360 in 1983.

Other causes include the proliferation in the number of this country's lawyers, of whom one-third have come into practice in the last five years. Attracting America's college graduates into the law is its lucrativeness, made so in no small part by the contingent fee system for liability suits.

Except for some Canadian provinces, nowhere else in the world but in America are lawyers allowed to charge a fee only if they win. In fact, to charge a contingent fee in France is a crime.

The "hit-the-jackpot" hopes raised by big jury awards and the "nothing-to-lose" attitude engendered by the contingent-fee system have been supported by other developments.

Distressing is the continued expansion of the concept of liability to justify large awards. For instance, a federal jury in Chicago awarded $850,000 in "hedonic damages" to the family of a man accidentally shot to death. The $850,000 was in addition to $750,000

NRA SURVEYS OPERATORS ABOUT LIQUOR LIABILITY INSURANCE

Restaurant owners and operators report they are having an increasingly difficult time obtaining liquor liability insurance for their establishments that serve beer, wine or distilled spirits. Some say the cost of such insurance is rising rapidly; others report they are encountering problems obtaining the necessary coverage.

Because the National Restaurant Association (NRA) wanted to discover just how widespread this problem is and what restaurateurs are doing to cope with the situation, NRA commissioned the Gallup Organization to survey restaurant operators about their liquor liability coverage.* The results of this survey are reported here.

Most have liquor liability insurance . . .

The vast majority of operators surveyed, 79 percent, reported they have liquor liability insurance for their units that serve alcoholic beverages. Only about two out of 10 said they did not have such coverage. For those who have liquor liability insurance, the cost is high. Respondents reported an average premium of $39,555 for coverage in the current fiscal year.

For those who presently have insurance, the past year or two have seen some dramatic changes. When asked, "Has your premium for liquor liability insurance increased in the past 12 months," seven out of 10 said "yes," and most said their premium had more than doubled. The average reported increase during the past 12 months was 110 percent.

Only about one-fourth indicated that their premium for liquor liability coverage had not increased in the past year. Some of these operators may have experienced increases in the prior year, however.

Many of those who reported a jump in their premiums have taken action to combat these increases. Fifteen percent said they have raised drink prices, and a similar proportion has instituted an alcohol awareness program. Some are looking for new insurance companies (9.1 percent), others have changed insurance companies (3.0 percent) and still others have lowered their coverage (2.4 percent). About eight percent report they have increased their support of lobbying efforts to change the laws. However, nearly half of those who have seen their liquor liability insurance

Has your premium increased in past 12 months?

Yes	69%
No	24%
Don't know	7%

**Based only on those who currently have liquor liability insurance.*
Source: NRA/Gallup Survey, November 1985.

Actions taken as a result of increased premiums*

Increased drink prices	15.2%
Instituted alcohol awareness program	14.5%
Looking for new insurance company	9.1%
Support lobbying to change the law	7.9%
Increased all menu prices	4.2%
Taken smaller net profit	3.0%
Changed insurance company	3.0%
Changed food and beverage mix	2.4%
Lowered coverage	2.4%
All other actions	12.4%
No action taken	46.1%

**Based only on those who currently have liquor liability insurance and whose premium has increased.*
Source: NRA/Gallup Survey, November 1985.

**The Gallup Organization interviewed 304 owners or managers of restaurant companies that have establishments serving beer, wine or distilled spirits. Only those who were knowledgeable about the conditions and costs associated with liquor liability insurance were questioned. All interviews were conducted between October 10 and November 20, 1985.*

awarded in compensatory and punitive damages.

"Very simply," said the presiding judge, "hedonic damages measure the taking away of the pleasure of being alive." Put another way, the $850,000 awarded the dead man's estate was the value the jury placed on the man's loss of the enjoyment of life.

All this leads to disrespect for our legal system as one aspect of it, service and product liability law, begins to look like a lottery.

Some results . . .

On the macro-economic scale, the abuse of liability law costs the U.S. billions of dollars in trade as U.S. manufacturers pay liability insurance premiums many times those paid by their overseas competitors. Micro-economically, 5.5 cents of every dollar American consumers spend now goes directly or indirectly for property and casualty insurance.

The new emphasis on protecting oneself from lawsuits has led to economic inefficiencies as, for example, doctors overprescribe and architects overdesign. Promiscuous litigation has driven up the cost of everything while adding nothing to America's gross national product (GNP).

Another aspect of the problem is the loss of services. Several doctors have stopped practicing obstetrics, an especially high-risk specialty. Many members of the clergy have stopped visiting homes for fear of being charged with seduction and being sued; others have stopped giving specific advice, fearing their legal liability if the advice proves wrong. And, as certified day-care centers close because they can't afford liability insurance, parents are left to choose from among uncertified as well as uninsured centers.

Still another loss is that some of America's best legal minds choose this non-productive but highly profitable pursuit, instead of going into, say, public service.

Finally, justice is often not served. Responsible suits are delayed years while the irresponsible ones are winnowed from court calendars. Then, when worthy victims finally win, they get to keep on average less than half of their compensation, with lawyers taking most of the rest.

A look at possible solutions . . .

For all those problems, there are solutions that don't require "killing all the lawyers," as suggested in Shakespeare's *King Lear.*

Some argue that a good place to start would be to limit the contingency-fee option to make it more reflective of the time, effort and skill an attorney puts into a client's case. By limiting rather than eliminating contingency fees, America's unique access to its courts for its poor can be preserved.

Putting a reasonable maximum on all court awards and putting an end to awards for punitive damages to the defendant would take away the incentive for lawyers to file lots of suits in the hope of "hitting it big" with one. If justice calls for the defendant to be punished for maliciousness, some have suggested that the punitive damages go to the state or to charity.

Making plaintiffs who lose their suits bear some or all of the defendants' costs would make plaintiffs reluctant to file frivolous suits. Making plaintiffs pay damages for misstatements of facts to further their suits would make the plaintiffs more responsible and also would result in less irresponsible suits.

If mediation, in which a third party tries to arrange a settlement, was made compulsory before bringing a case to court, a lot more cases would stay out of court. Mandatory and binding arbitration for small claims would be a big timesaver, too.

Altering the judicial doctrine of joint and several liability would bring relief to joint defendants who sometimes bear a small share of the fault for an injury but must pay most or all of the judgment. The doctrine makes any one of several defendants, who jointly cause an injury, liable for all the damages. In theory, that defendant would be reimbursed by the other defendants.

Finally, curbing abuses in legal procedures would curb unscrupulous lawyers. As an example, the discovery process is sometimes used not to aid in redressing a grievance but to discover if there is a grievance for which a suit can be filed.

There are other solutions to the problem of promiscuous litigation, solutions that need not result in Americans giving up the right to their cherished day in court.

Whatever solutions are agreed upon, they should be implemented with all deliberate speed. The longer they are delayed, the more America becomes a suing society in which the cost of everything is driven up as trust between individuals is driven down.

If the day comes when justice for all means everybody is suing everybody, then there will be justice for nobody. ❑

premium rise reported they have done nothing to counteract this increased expense.

Giving up serving beer, wine or alcohol is not a viable alternative for most operators: More than nine out of 10 operators said they would not discontinue serving beer, wine and cocktails. Only eight percent said they had considered giving up their alcoholic beverage service.

Majority have never been party to a liability suit . . .

Nearly all operators surveyed (91.6 percent) who presently have liquor liability insurance reported they have never been party to a liquor liability suit. For most of those who had been party to such legal action, it has been more than two years since the suit.

Many had liquor liability coverage in the past . . .

NRA asked operators who do not presently have liquor liability coverage whether they had ever had such coverage and why they no longer have it. Three out of 10 operators reported that at one time they did carry liquor liability coverage, but have dropped it because of the expense. On the other hand, about six out of 10 operators who do not have coverage said they had never had it. The reasons given: No need, too expensive or not required by law to have it.

—Bette Hoyt

***Editor's Note:** *For a more indepth analysis of the problem, don't miss "National Symposium: The Crisis in Product & Service Liability," sponsored by Pennsylvania State University in conjunction with the National Restaurant Association on January 29 in Washington, DC. For further information, contact NRA at 311 First Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20001 or call (800)424-5156 (toll free) or (202)638-6100.*

VIEWPOINT

HOW TO STEP INTO CATERING WITHOUT FALLING FLAT

Catering provides restaurants with increased exposure, efficient kitchen use and an additional profit center. But a restaurateur cannot enter the catering market naive to the potential problems and additional management demands.

by Jim Errant

We made our first tentative steps into the mysterious world of catering a little over a year ago. It began with a request from a personal friend to handle her class reunion, planned for the center court of a suburban shopping mall in which we have one of our four Claim Company restaurants. Since the site was only an escalator away, it seemed like an easy way to add a few extra covers to an otherwise average night. Our company's executive chef, Daniel Harms, was recruited to design a custom menu. Staff from the Claim Company of Northbrook, IL, were trained in the fine art of banquet service.

Happily, the party came off without a hitch and, soon, the calls started rolling in. Reunion guests spread the word. The requests poured in—more reunions, a benefit, company picnics. It quickly became apparent to me that this new business was a logical extension of my restaurant group. In June 1984 it became a separate division, Chef's Catering, Inc., with Harms as both general manager and executive chef.

A year after its inception, we still use only in-house staff, whether it is for private dinners at home for 15 or business luncheons for 700. We have added banquet equipment and supplies slowly as needed, including the purchase of china and hot trucks from a closed local supper club. This expansion pace is, I think, critically important. Moving too quickly or taking on jobs that you are not prepared to handle can be devastating to your reputation . . . and your finances.

I have tried to be selective at the outset, accepting only those parties that offer good exposure and high profit. Catering really translates into another form of public relations, a way of reaching untapped clients for both your restaurant and your catering operation. And it is a means of diversification—bringing your services to clients in their homes and offices.

"Moving too quickly or taking on jobs that you are not prepared to handle can be devastating to your reputation . . . and your finances."

Before you start . . .

You need to take a look at your facility, your management and your staff to see if you can realistically diversify into catering. Then you need to examine the market. What is out there now? Who is the competition? Is there a need for the kind of service you plan to offer? Indeed, this kind of service should stem from what you are already doing well at your restaurant so you can enhance your positive reputation. Promise yourself that you will provide the same quality of service and food off-premise that you do in your restaurant.

Don't forget to set some long-range financial goals for the business—how far you expect to take it, what level of service you plan to offer, what level of investment you are ready to make. Look at the number of parties, their size and the markup necessary to be

9 Catering tips

Here are some tips for developing a small catering operation:

1. Thorough planning—with a site inspection—is the key to success. A restaurateur at his own establishment is in control of the facility, staff and product. A caterer can be out of control of these facets because the facility is temporary and may not be designed for large groups.
2. I view a party of 50 as 50 new and potential customers. Since guests at most parties cannot afford a catered party, at least they can be restaurant customers.
3. Find out what the other catering companies in your area are doing. What the market *doesn't* need is another me-too product.
4. Start small—do types of parties and events that are easy to handle before you expand to more demanding events.
5. Hire a chef or manager experienced in catering to join your staff. You will benefit from that person's past experience and expertise.
6. Ask the chef to be the salesman. Clients feel more confident about the outcome of the party when they can talk to the person planning the menu.
7. Throw in a little extra—nuts, candies, a dessert. Cover the cost, but make the customer feel he is getting something extra.
8. Make sure you are aware of the responsibilities of the host or party planner. If their end is not up to your standards, it will be obvious to guests.
9. Make up a crisis list and go over it with your management and staff members. Rehearse problems and solutions to every possible crisis.

"Catering really translates into another form of public relations, a way of reaching untapped clients for both your restaurant and your catering operation."

profitable in the long term. We have found that it is easy to be competitive in pricing and still maintain a good profit margin. Remember, your overhead is already paid for in your restaurant. You can realize considerable savings by using existing staff and preparation areas during off-peak restaurant hours. You can also save money by purchasing jointly for both operations and by sharing menu items.

Put systems in place . . .

Once you have decided to venture into catering, set up a separate company. This makes it easier to separate labor, licensing and other operating costs. Billing and internal controls become simpler, too. Ask your lawyer to draw up a standard catering contract. Develop job descriptions for everyone from the managers to the salespersons to the wait staff. Sign up for complete insurance coverage—property, liability, workman's compensation, automobile. Get the necessary licenses for selling liquor and food off-premise.

Sample menus, while primarily a sales tool, are an integral part of the systems approach. They allow you to plan your purchasing, preparation and service and help you set prices. Although forms seem to be the curse of doing business, you will need a whole new batch of them for your catering enterprise—food, beverage and supply forms; inventory forms; pricing formula sheets; prep sheets; standardized recipes; packing and transportation checklists as well as the many payroll forms.

Selling your services . . .

Only when you have *everything* you can think of in place should you begin the tricky business of sales solicitation. As with any business, you might have a wonderful product, but if you cannot sell it to the customer effectively, no one will ever know. Therefore, it is crucial to select the proper person to be your spokesperson and chief salesman. I chose my chef. I am lucky since he is personable, creative and experienced in professional catering. My customers love dealing with the person who will design their menus and make their meals.

You will need to have on-hand costs for all the services you offer and set an appropriate markup for services you buy from others. Will you offer floral services? Will you rent tables and chairs, arrange for entertainment, supply linen?

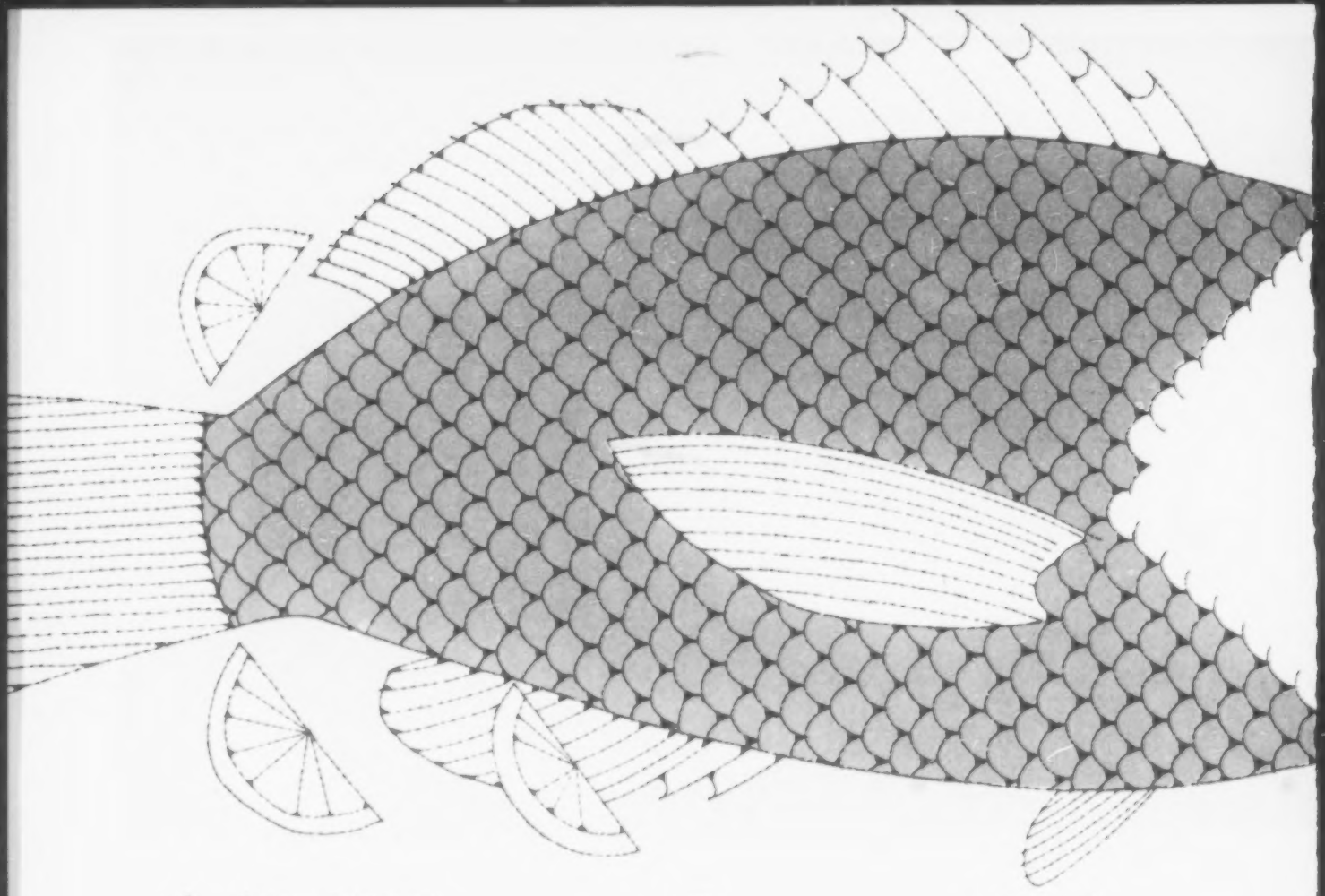
Keep handy a list of satisfied customers and their telephone numbers. Testimonials are one of the most persuasive sales tools.

We are selective about the parties we book. We interview potential clients closely. I think we save ourselves countless problems and unhappy customers when we do so. We physically inspect the party site to determine if the location is too far or too inaccessible. We find out if the budget is too small, the client too hard to please or the menu unworkable. If any of these are the case, we do not take the booking. Even though it is hard to decline, in some cases you may be the wrong catering company for the job.

Remember to follow up with a thank you letter, preferably over your signature. And put the party date in next year's tickler file for another booking.

"We are selective about the parties we book. We interview potential clients closely. I think we save ourselves countless problems and unhappy customers when we do so."

This article is based on a presentation delivered at NRA's National Conference on Catering in November 1985 by Jim Errant, president of Errant Enterprises in Chicago, IL.



Nutrition & Fish: a succulent pairing

by Jacqueline Williams & Goldie Silverman

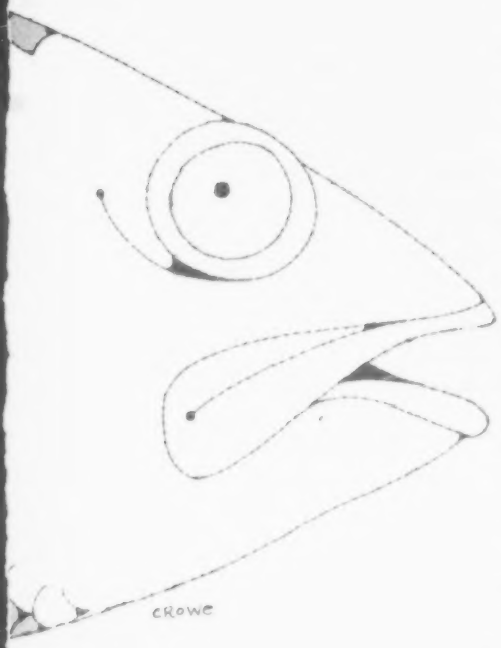
Alert restaurateurs are adding a new category to their menus—dishes low in fat and salt. Sharon Kramis, recipe developer for Restaurants Unlimited, a closely held West Coast chain which features an extensive selection of seafood entrees in its Cutter's and Horatio's restaurants, describes the movement as "part of moving into this decade." It is, she says, another service that a restaurant can provide. And if Restaurants Unlimited's experience is an accurate barometer, low-fat foodservice can be profitable.

Seafood plays a leading role in any restaurant's attempt to offer healthful dishes. Ounce for ounce, even the fattiest fish contain less fat than most red meat. But more importantly, recent research suggests that fish oil is unique among fats; besides apparently holding the key to a healthy heart, it may have a protective action that prevents clots from forming in blood vessels. In other words, a fish a day might keep the doctor away.

The message is getting across: More restaurant patrons are asking for seafood dishes and appetizers prepared in healthful ways. Sea Galley Stores Inc., a Seattle, WA-based chain in the middle of an extensive repositioning towards lighter fare, reports it now serves less than 15 percent of its fish fried. Even crab cakes, a staple in the Chesapeake Bay market area, aren't just for frying any more: Sea Galley says 50 percent of its customers in Maryland now ask for their crab cakes baked instead of fried.

The growing demand for more healthful fare means cooks no longer can get away simply with frying seafood or broiling it in a bath of butter. But what can they do instead?

Roland Henin, a creator of the seafood cookery curriculum at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, NY, recommends fat with flavor. Instead of cream or butter-based sauces on grilled, broiled or poached fish, Henin suggests using yogurt, vegetable purees, tofu, reduced fish stock, fresh tomato sauce, duxelles, fresh herbs or a delicate touch of spices. He also suggests adding crushed mustard seeds to reduced fish cooking liquid or steaming leeks in fish stock and then pureeing them with yogurt. Pureed roasted red or yellow peppers are another flavor enhancer he likes. Henin warns against heavy flour or cheese sauces which mask the delicate taste of fish.



Other cooks like to use fruit juice with fish. For example, they marinate firm white fish in orange juice mixed with sherry, garlic, ginger and dry mustard and then bake or broil it. Some like to use non-stick cooking pans. Thin fish steaks can be cooked quickly with little or no fat, perhaps just a dribble of a flavored oil, such as sesame or walnut, and then served under a light sauce.

Baked fish coated with a well-seasoned, crunchy breading can simulate fried fish without the calories. A basic recipe uses either cornmeal or whole wheat pastry flour, or a combination of the two, seasoned with parsley, chili powder, dry mustard or sesame seed. Dipping the fish in egg white and/or skim milk instead of whole egg and milk keeps the calories and cholesterol down. The coated fish bakes at a moderately high temperature for a short time. The only fat needed is a small amount of oil on the baking pan to prevent the fish from sticking.

Char-broiling and poaching are the two most popular methods for low-fat cooking. Exotic woods are the current rage, with a light sauce or fresh lemon presented alongside the finished seafood. Oilier species work particularly well on the grill because the oils they contain keep them from drying out. Don't be afraid to put a broiled fatty fish on your low-calorie menu. Remember that fish oils themselves are not the problem; it is the other fats frequently used in cooking that should be avoided.

Poaching, a classic method of cooking fish by gently simmering it in liquid, lends itself to restaurant cooking because the liquid can be prepared in advance and be ready to receive the fish when it is ordered. A poaching liquid can be as simple as lemon water or as complex as court bouillon. Gerard Lewis, menu planner for the ten-state Sea Galley chain, says that his kitchens keep both handy. He recommends a Mediterranean sauce as an accompaniment for low-fat entrees (see recipe).

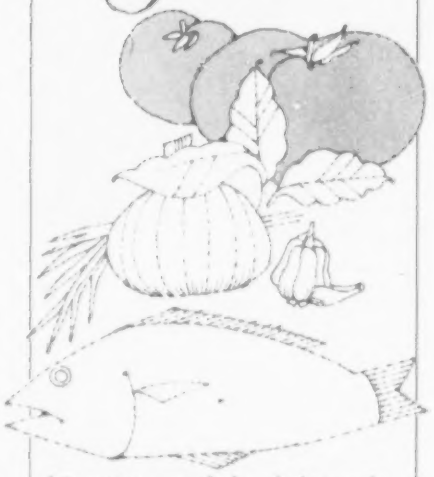
We asked Henin to give us some specific suggestions for preparing fish in advance so that it would be low in fat but still moist. He recommended four methods: (1) wrapping the fish in cabbage leaves, chard, spinach, filo dough or parchment paper; (2) serving *en casserole*, with the fish resting on a bed of cooked spinach, mushrooms and tomatoes, lightly brushed with a *mirepoix* or coated with crumbs and held in the refrigerator; (3) broiling marinated brochettes; and (4) stewing fish. Both the marinade and the stewing broth may be made ahead of time.

All fish, Henin emphasized, low-fat or not, should be kept cold through every stage of preparation until cooked *a la minute* and served immediately.

The species selected must also be appropriate for the cooking method. Brochettes require firm fish, such as shark or halibut, or shellfish, such as scallops, that can be cut into chunks at least one-inch square. Stir-frying is not often thought of for fish cookery, but species firm enough to hold together are excellent prepared this way.

Selecting an appropriate cooking method, preparing in advance with low-fat ingredients, measuring carefully and choosing the right species of fish are all important steps that allow a restaurant to take advantage of its clientele's demand for nutritious yet flavorful sea fare. But for low-calorie offerings to succeed, it is important to offer these menu options without disrupting the kitchen routine.

Mediterranean Sauce



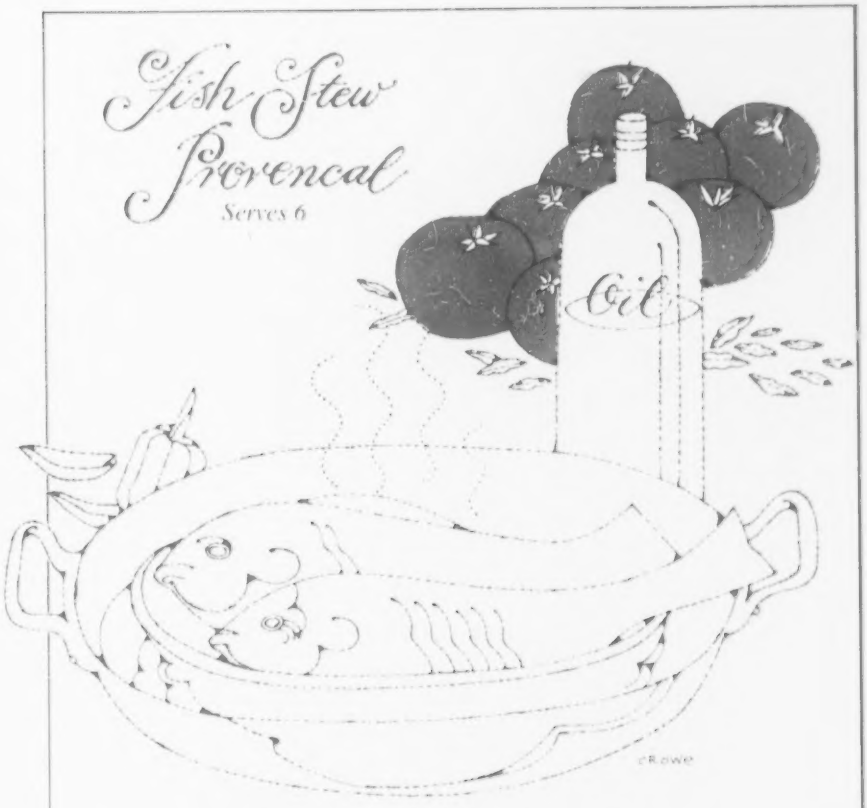
6 tomatoes, peeled and chopped
½ teaspoon oregano
½ teaspoon thyme
½ teaspoon basil
1 teaspoon chives
2 green onions, finely minced
⅓ cup vermouth
1 tablespoon olive oil
½ teaspoon minced garlic
1 cup fish stock
salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Combine tomatoes, herbs, onions and vermouth and simmer for 30 minutes. Saute garlic in olive oil. Add garlic and fish stock to vegetables, and continue to cook for 30 minutes or until sauce is thickened.

—Courtesy of Sea Galley Restaurants

Some restaurateurs mark certain choices on the menu with an emblem that means "heart healthy" or "light," while others simply state whether the fish entree was cooked without butter, seasoning or oil. Symbols vary: A small heart is popular for low-cholesterol or low-fat dishes, and a star is occasionally used to indicate low-sodium. Some restaurants don't mark the menu at all, preferring instead to adjust to their patrons' requests.

Odette Bery, owner of Another Season Restaurant (Boston, MA), likes guests to inform her of their special needs when they make their reservations. Then she can take time to fix a special dish, like a fish stew. Bery can also accommodate her pa-



3 onions, peeled
5 cloves garlic, peeled
2 oranges
½ cup oil
1 gallon fish stock
12 tomatoes, peeled
3 tablespoons dried basil or thyme
5 pounds skinless haddock, pollock or cod
2 bunches parsley, washed and drained

Finely dice the onion. Crush the garlic. Seed the tomatoes and chop finely. Finely grate the rind of the oranges. Heat the oil in a two gallon saucepan. Add the onion and garlic and saute till the onion is clear, being careful not to brown. Add the orange rind, fish stock and tomatoes and basil. Bring to a boil and gently simmer for 30 minutes. While the stew is simmering, cut the fish into one-inch pieces, and sprig and chop the parsley. Just before serving, add the fish and parsley, and gently simmer for 5–7 minutes until the fish is cooked. Be careful not to overcook or the fish will break up. Season the fish stew with freshly ground black pepper.

Fish Stock

5 to 7 fish frames (no heads) of haddock or pollock
2 ounces butter
1 onion, peeled and sliced
4 stalks celery, sliced
1 large carrot, sliced
1 bay leaf

Clean the fish bones by rubbing salt into the bloody parts, then rinsing under cold water. (This dislodges the blood, which can make your stock bitter.) Heat the butter in a three-gallon stainless steel saucepan. Add the vegetables, cover, and gently saute, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are soft. Add the bay leaf and the fish bones. Cover with cold water and bring to a boil. Gently simmer for five minutes. A beige-colored foam will come to the top; skim this off and continue to skim as the stock is simmering. Simmer for 40 minutes. Remove the fish bones and discard. Pour the stock through a fine sieve.

—Courtesy of Odette Bery, Another Season Restaurant

trons by presenting fish from the menu in a low-fat method. But these adjustments take time and can be disruptive to the kitchen, as they were on a recent Saturday night when five customers asked for special preparations without advance warning.

At the Four Seasons Olympic Hotel in Seattle, WA, Executive Chef James Walsh says diners stopped asking for special meals after the hotel started its Alternative Cuisine program. Lunch selections from the Alternative Cuisine menu contain less than 450 calories, while dinners run under 650. The option is quite popular: 25 to 30 percent of all lunches and 10 percent of all dinners come from the new menu. More and more business people, Walsh says, prefer a light lunch before heading back for a long afternoon at the desk. Others choose the light meals so they can "bank the calories for dessert."

Whether a restaurant has a customer who needs to avoid all fats or one who just wants to save his calories, it is important to have a staff that understands the entire nutrition program and can answer questions about ingredients and preparation. Staff training programs must include enough information so waiters and waitresses can reply knowledgeably to customer requests. Service people should taste each dish so they can describe it to patrons in an appetizing way, with specific details on texture, flavor and method of preparation.

New menu items, new cooking methods and additional staff training may sound expensive, but they are not. Properly conceived and executed, they will bring a return on the investment well worth the extra effort.

The economic rewards of offering more low-fat fare are not lost on the foodservice industry; many chains are currently rewriting their menus—some are changing their names. Even some hamburger chains like Wendy's and Jack-in-the-Box have gotten the message; when the fat goes down, sales go up. ⌟

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TO YOUR HEALTH

The difference between taste and flavor

The food ad proclaims, "great taste and flavor." These may seem like redundant terms but, technically, they are not. Humans perceive only four taste qualities—sweet, sour, bitter and salty—yet we are able to distinguish an endless variety of flavors. That is because flavor is actually the interaction of two senses: taste and smell.

A look at taste . . .

More than 10,000 taste buds are responsible for detecting the taste of food. Housed in the small bumps on the tongue known as papillae, taste buds are located on the top, back and edges of the tongue. Taste buds are also found on the soft palate, pharynx and epiglottis. Taste receptors have a short life, approximately 10 days, but they are constantly regenerating. That is why taste sensation is impaired only temporarily when the buds are burned by steaming hot food.

Although taste may be more often associated with flavor, smell is the more dominant of the two flavor senses. Olfactory cells not only are more plentiful—about five to 10 million in number—but they also are far more sensitive than the taste buds. Without smell, our ability to identify foods is reduced by 60 to 70 percent. For instance, apples and onions taste so much alike—sweet, sour and bitter—that in the absence of smell they could be confused!

These odor detectors are located in the upper nasal cavity, which is why we tend to sniff when trying to distinguish faint odors. Although seven primary olfactory stimulants have been classified, there may be up to 50 or more that contribute to the thousands of odors we are able to differentiate.

Fatigue diminishes intensity . . .

Both taste and smell are subject to fatigue or adaptation. When the sensory cells are exposed continuously to the same substance, the intensity of perception diminishes. We tend to become accustomed to flavors the longer the exposure time until we eventually do not even notice them. Smell adapts particularly quickly. Approximately 50 percent adapts during the initial few seconds of stimulation. Thereafter, the adaptation slows. Think of how the aroma of freshly baked bread fades to near extinction shortly after you enter a bakery.

Much attention has been paid to the developmental aspects of taste and smell. The human fetus' taste buds are mature by the 15th week of development. Since newborns exhibit a preference for sweets, the sweet tooth is believed to be innate. Other tastes take time to mature, but by the time they are two years old, children respond to salt and bitter tastes as well as adults do.

In contrast to taste perception, which is highly developed at birth, the olfactory system develops mostly after birth. Infants and toddlers do not react strongly to odors, but by the time they are five children can discriminate odors on an adult level.

Beyond the preschool period, taste and odor sensitivity do not develop much with age. Other characteristics, such as appearance, texture and psychological factors, become more influential in how we perceive flavor and react to food. Food may be rejected simply because its texture produces an unpleasant feeling in the mouth.

Also, we tend to develop certain expectations as we become familiar with different foods. Taste tests have shown that consumers who are accustomed to green-wrapped, storage-ripened tomatoes actually prefer this type over a vine-ripened tomato with superior flavor. Although some foods, like margarine, are more affected by color than others, a color change usually alters flavor expectation. For example, many think white chocolate tastes less chocolaty than brown chocolate.

The degree of hunger, too, can influence the appreciation for food. Hunger does not alter taste sensation, per se, but it can enhance the awareness of taste.

Both taste and odor perception begin to decline after 45 years of age, but smell is more vulnerable to age deterioration. The odor detection threshold for some foods is 11 times greater in old versus young people. These sensory changes account for the disinterest in food, which is characteristic of the elderly.

Nearly two million Americans experience disorders of taste or smell, many as a result of one of four illnesses: influenza, hepatitis, occult (hidden) cancer and head injuries. These illnesses produce secondary zinc deficiencies, which alter taste perception. Normal taste usually is restored after the illness subsides but sometimes not without zinc supplementation.

Although many of the factors that influence taste perception are beyond your control, there are a few you may want to consider.

- Not only are the taste buds more sensitive at warm temperatures, but hot food is more odorous than cold food. Therefore, warm foods seem more flavorful than cold foods. Keep this in mind when you taste foods, such as puddings or sorbets during preparation. The flavor can change when these items are served at a cooler temperature.
- Salt is a more effective flavor enhancer when added during cooking rather than after. This is especially important if you are trying to limit the salt in your food.
- If the majority of your patrons are elderly, you may consider overseasoning the food to compensate for the sensory deterioration that accompanies age.
- People tend to prefer foods due to familiarity rather than quality. It is helpful to know your patrons' preferences and expectations.

—Claire Regan, R.D.

Fisher's Law #68

Class reunion*

I recently attended a class reunion, which I'm not sure was a good idea. After you go to a reunion, you often wish you hadn't, and you really wonder if your classmates think you have changed as much as you *know* they have. Let me tell you about some of my classmates at the reunion.

Cal Luha was there, drinking coffee and talking with Persimmon Tee. Champ Agne came as it was a special occasion. Baby Peeze was still baby faced. Angel Hare was still thin. Pete Abred looked a little leathery. Stew Prunes was running all about. Fig Newton kept looking for his date and Garden Beets let everyone know he went to Harvard.

We had good representation from our athletes. The defensive line of the football team came together: Beef Wellington, Beef Brochette, Beef Rounds and Beef Pateeze. Al Ligator was a tough skinned kid as well. Courter Pounder, our quarterback, showed up as did our center, Red Snapper, and our tackles Pork Loin and Crown Roast. Our place kicker, Toe Mane, wired that he wasn't coming as he was sick.

A couple of my old basketball team mates were there as well. Shrimp Creole, the center, came with String Beenz, who brought his wife Lima. Our head cheerleader, Pepper Ony, came by and brought her husband Bull.

Our class had several marriages within it. Ham Burger married Barb Becue; Frank Furter, who is the same old hot dog, wound up with Chili Sauce; Potatoes O'Brien matched up with Pim Ento and Brock O'Lee fell for Hollan Daize.

We had three sets of twins in the class. Romaine Letus was there along with his brother Bibb. Porter House came as did his sister Parker, and it was good to see that Olive Oyl is still slick. But that brother of hers, Castor, is still hard to take.

It's amusing how impressions you had of people way back when spring to mind when you see them. Flo Rentine was an inexpensive date since all she ate was spinach. Julienne Karats is still a cut-up. Al Fabet is still in the soup as is Minnie Strony. Clams Casino turned out to be a gambler. Grape Punch was a boxer for a time. Terry Yaki is still spicy as is Basil Leef. Raz Berry was always red faced, and Ann Chovies still talks about Pete Zah. Moe Zarella is a big cheese somewhere. Bain Marie is still in hot water. Quiche Lorraine is now macho and Clam Chowder still doesn't talk much. Sweet Breds was always the brainiest kid. Sue Chini still seeks popularity and Po Tatoes is his same old starchy, healthy self.

A number of the girls came, notably Sassa Frass (who always talked back to everybody) and Saffron Rice, who is still bright and colorful. Sugar Kane is still sweet, Selzer Water still sparkles and Kavi Yar still has expensive taste and probably should have married Oysters Rockefeller or Phil Lemignon. Coco Nutt is still a little flakey. Marcia Mello still has that soft voice and Pearl Onyons was crying as always.

Some people never seem to change. Tom Ato still hangs around with Bay Conn (who looked a little porky) and the Letus brothers, Romaine and Bibb. Water Mellon is still a little seedy, but big and likeable. Peaches Flambe is still volatile. Bananas Foster has an incendiary disposition. You still have to approach Eggs Benedict very carefully, and the same is true of Sue Flay. Caesar Salad, who married a girl named Waldorf, still looks very romanesque. Anne Neeset will never change, and Pepper Mynt will always be easy to digest. Red Wyne still looks full bodied. He married a girl named Rose. Reuben Sanwych is the same old Reuben he always was.

Some people inevitably turn out differently than you expect. Carney Vore is a born again vegetarian; MacIntosh Apple is now big in computers. Al Fredo became very popular as did Artie Choke. Cheri Cobbler married a shoemaker, and Lem Onade is making a comeback. Sam Monstake is big in the Northwest, and Hominy Gritz moved to the South. Wiener Schnitzel went to Germany, and Burr Ito is doing big things in Mexico. Sal Monella didn't turn out well at all, however.

Pi Krust is in the dessert business, and Tom Turkey and Gefilta Fish are business partners in a meat packing operation. Sy Rupp covers a lot of things, and Mack Aroni shows up in a lot of different places as does Van Nella. Gus Pacho is a little cold, but Al Mondine is a good soul.

Jose Cuervo wrote a song about himself (what would you call that—autobiolyrical?). Some of the other guys—Jim Beam, Johnny Walker, Jack Daniels—have all aged very well, and Bud Wizer, Tom Collins and Brandy Alexander are the same responsible group they always were. They told me that Herb Senspices just opened a condiment business.

After the reunion we all went over to the old hang out, Anty Pasto's, who is still married to that Crab Louis.

Well, it's time for **Fisher's Law #68. Tilt! Error message! Tilt!** (Are you kidding? No one could make a Fisher's Law out of this!)

**Written with the assistance of Yvonne Fisher and Joan Campbell.*

Consumers spend more on eating out

Although the proportion spent on food away from home has increased for many consumer segments, certain groups typically spend more than others. This article, based on the Consumer Expenditure Survey 1982–83,* *presents a detailed look at who is spending what for restaurant meals.*

Americans love to eat out. Whether in celebration of a special event or as a fast alternative to cooking at home, eating out continues to play an important role in consumer lifestyles.

However, today's restaurant patrons are more demanding—they expect high quality food and a varied menu. As a result, restaurateurs have become more innovative. Their success in appealing to a wide range of consumer tastes and preferences is evident in the increasing amount consumers are spending on eating out.

Summary . . .

The proportion of total food dollars spent annually on eating out has risen—from 28.1 percent in 1972–73 to 32.4 percent in 1980–81 and to an even higher 36.0 percent in 1982–83. According to NRA, when travel food expenses and institutional foodservice sales are included, the share of total food dollars spent on restaurant meals and snacks exceeds 40.0 percent.

In 1982–83 the typical American household spent $55.11 per week on food. Food at home expenditures reached $35.51 per week in 1982–83 and accounted for slightly less than two-thirds of the total. Weekly food away from home expenditures totaled $19.60 and represented 35.6 percent of the average household's weekly food budget.

The average household spent 19.9 percent more on eating out in 1982–83 than in 1980–81 or 7.6 percent after adjustments are made for menu price inflation.** Weekly food at home expenditures, on the other hand, increased a slower 4.0 percent over the same period. This translates into an inflation-adjusted decline of 3.7 percent.

Household characteristics	1980–81	1982–83
All households	**$6.29**	**$7.84**
Age of household head		
Under 25	$6.94	$8.52
25–34	6.63	7.79
35–44	6.03	7.43
45–54	6.80	8.29
55–64	6.39	8.43
65 and older	4.98	6.10
Household income		
Less than $5,000	$4.42	$5.95
$5,000–$9,999	4.01	4.41
$10,000–$14,999	5.80	5.40
$15,000–$19,999	5.93	7.09
$20,000–$29,999	6.96	7.59
$30,000–$39,999	9.33*	9.52
$40,000 and over	na	12.70
Household size		
One	$11.59	$14.14
Two	8.15	10.10
Three	5.93	6.51
Four	5.14	6.83
Five	4.36	4.92
Six or more	2.97	3.15
Region		
Northeast	$6.41	$8.00
Midwest	5.79	7.11
South	6.42	7.58
West	6.92	8.94

*Represents per capita expenditures for households with annual incomes of $30,000 or more.

Source: *Consumer Expenditure Survey: Diary Survey*, 1982–83, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1985

Middle-aged householders spending more . . .

Middle-aged householders are spending more on eating out than other age groups. For example, households headed by individuals aged 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 spent an average of $25.20 and $25.70 per week, respectively.

Members of these groups may spend more on eating out because they enjoy relatively high annual incomes.

*The Consumer Expenditure Survey 1982–83 is part of an ongoing program developed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics to track consumer expenditures. From 1888 to 1980, these surveys had been conducted approximately every 10 years. Since 1980, they have been conducted annually in order to monitor consumer expenditure more closely.

*BLS includes diary surveys that are completed by consumer units for two consecutive one-week periods. In 1982–83, 5,000 households were surveyed. Only urban consumers are represented. Students living in college housing report their own expenditures directly instead of having them reported by their parents. Expenditures incurred while away from home overnight or longer are excluded.

**NRA wants to point out that the strong economic recovery of 1983 influenced consumer spending habits during the two-year period covered by the BLS surveys. In 1980 and 1981 the economy was in a recession, while in late 1982 and in 1983 the economy entered a boom period. As a result, consumers tended to increase their eating out frequency and their spending for restaurant meals more dramatically than they would normally. NRA believes that the increase in the proportion of the food dollar allocated to restaurant meals and snacks will continue. However, the rate of increase will not be as rapid as that indicated from these two expenditure surveys.

Finally, the term "householder" in this survey refers to the first member of the consumer unit mentioned by respondents as an owner or renter of the consumer dwelling. This differs from surveys prior to the 1980-81 survey when husbands were automatically considered the "head" of a household unit. The term "consumer unit" refers to households whose members are not always related, such as two singles living together.

They often have more than one wage earner and are often less in debt than their younger counterparts. NRA's *Meal Consumption Behavior* study has determined that both high income households and those with working wives or mothers eat out more frequently in one week than the average consumer.

In addition, according to the Bureau of Census, the number of adults between the ages of 45 and 54 is projected to increase 62.7 percent to approximately 37 million by the year 2000, making members of this group even more important future restaurant patrons.

Households headed by individuals between the ages of 55 and 64 have significantly increased their expenditures on restaurant meals also. Members of this group allocated 34.1 percent of their weekly food budget on meals away from home in 1982–83 compared with a lower 28.8 percent in 1980–81. In addition, the actual amount spent per week by these households on restaurant meals and snacks rose from $14.70 in 1980–81 to $20.31 in 1982–83.

Households headed by individuals age 65 and older spent the least amount per week on food away from home in 1982–83—$10.37. The proportion of total weekly food dollars spent on eating out for this group, however, has increased, from 24.3 percent in 1980–81 to 27.4 percent in 1982–83.

While older consumers are spending more on eating out, it is younger consumers who continue to allocate the largest proportion of their total food budget on meals away from home. In 1982–83, households headed by someone age 25 or younger spent $15.34 per week eating out. This represents almost half (47.4 percent) their total weekly food budget. Households headed by individuals between the ages of 25 and 34 also spent a larger than average proportion on eating out—$21.03 per week on restaurant meals and snacks in 1982–83 or 38.8 percent of total food expenditures.

Household characteristics	1980–81		1982–83	
	Amount	Proportion	Amount	Proportion
All households	**$16.35**	**32.4%**	**$19.60**	**35.6%**
Age of household head				
Under 25	$12.49	42.8%	$15.34	47.4%
25–34	18.57	35.8	21.03	38.8
35–44	22.31	32.1	25.26	35.4
45–54	21.09	33.0	25.70	34.5
55–64	14.70	28.8	20.31	34.1
65 and older	8.47	24.3	10.37	27.4
Household income				
Less than $5,000	$7.08	26.5%	$8.92	34.9%
$5,000–$9,999	8.43	24.3	9.26	26.1
$10,000–$14,999	13.93	31.4	13.50	29.1
$15,000–$19,999	17.21	31.5	17.73	33.5
$20,000–$29,999	21.58	32.7	23.17	35.3
$30,000–$39,999	30.78*	37.7	28.56	38.0
$40,000 and over	na	na	40.65	42.7
Household Size				
One	$11.59	44.8%	14.14	50.3%
Two	16.30	34.1	20.20	37.6
Three	17.80	31.0	19.53	31.4
Four	20.57	29.5	27.31	33.6
Five	21.78	27.5	24.58	28.0
Six or more	19.91	21.3	21.14	22.8
Region				
Northeast	$16.67	31.0%	$20.00	34.2%
Midwest	15.63	31.0	18.50	34.7
South	16.05	33.7	18.94	36.2
West	17.30	34.2	21.45	37.2

*Represents weekly expenditures for households with annual incomes of $3,000 or more.
Source: *Consumer Expenditure Survey: Diary Survey*, 1982–83, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1985.

Upper income families spend more . . .

Industry research has shown that higher income households eat out more frequently than do households with lower incomes. On average, consumers from households with incomes in excess of $25,000 eat out 4.3 times per week versus only 2.9 times for households with incomes less than $15,000, according to NRA's *Meal Consumption Behavior*. Data from BLS' consumer expenditure survey show that this frequency translates into more dollars being spent in restaurants. For example, consumers with incomes in excess of $40,000 spent more both in dollar amounts and proportionately than do other income groups. In 1982–83, households with incomes of $40,000 or more spent an average of $40.65 per week on restaurant meals and snacks, accounting for 42.7 percent of their total weekly food budget.

Consumers with incomes between $30,000 and $39,999 per year also spent a considerable amount on meals and snacks outside the home in 1982–83—$28.56 per week or 38.0 percent of weekly food expenditures. Although this is below that spent for households with annual earnings over $40,000, it is substantially above the household average of $19.60.

Households with high incomes are an important target market for restaurateurs. According to *American Demographics* magazine, by 1995 almost 19 million households will be earning more than $35,000 per year. NRA research reveals that these individuals

are more likely to have tried various specialty concepts, including sushi, gourmet hamburgers and diet/lite menu items. In addition, because many of these families are two earner households with children, they place high priority on convenience.

Singles biggest spenders . . .

On a per capita basis, singles spent the most on eating out in 1982–83, allocating just over half (50.3 percent) their total food budget to meals and snacks away from home. This represents a substantial increase over 1980–81 when singles spent 44.8 percent of their weekly food budget on eating out. The average single household spent $14.14 weekly on restaurant meals in 1982–83, which translates to $735.28 annually.

Recent NRA research indicates that single consumers eat out more often in one week than the average individual, 4.3 times versus 3.7 times. They are frequent patrons at fast food establishments, underscoring their desire for convenience and relatively low priced meals. They also are adventuresome diners, expressing willingness to try new concepts and various ethnic dishes.

Two-member households allocate a large proportion of their annual food budget on meals away from home. More than one-third (37.4 percent) of their overall food expenditures in 1982–83 went for restaurant meals. In addition, members of this group increased their per capita away from home food expenditures more than did any other household group, from $8.15 per week in 1980–81 to $10.10 in 1982–83.

Married couples spent a slightly larger amount on eating out than other two person households. In 1982–83, these individuals spent $21.30 per week on restaurant meals or $10.65 per person.

Larger households spent a lower than average amount on eating out—$3.15 per week per person in 1982–83, less than half the $7.84 average for all households. Also, households with six or more individuals allocated only 22.8 percent of overall food expenditures for food away from home in 1982–83 versus a much higher 35.6 percent for all households. Conversely, these large households spent the most per week on food at home, $71.58.

When they do eat out, however, families with children are more likely to visit fast food and family style restaurants, which are convenient and offer good food at low and moderate prices.

Regional data . . .

The amount spent on food away from home varies slightly from region to region. Households in the Northeast and West spent an above average amount on restaurant meals and snacks in 1982–83 ($20.00 and $21.45 per week, respectively) while below average expenditures were recorded for the Midwestern and Southern regions—$18.94 and $18.50 per week, respectively.

In addition, households in the West allocated the largest proportion of their total weekly food dollar on eating out—37.2 percent. Southern families, ranking second, allocated 36.2 percent of their weekly food budget on eating out and Midwestern households spent 34.7 percent of their total weekly food dollar on restaurant meals. The region with the lowest dollar proportion spent on food away from home was the Northeast—34.2 percent.

—Sallie Adams

Focus group research

What consumers are saying about dining out

*What do customers like or dislike about their restaurant meal? What restaurant concepts do patrons like best? What role does eating out play in a customer's daily life? These are just some of the questions the National Restaurant Association asked participants in a series of focus groups last September to determine patron attitudes toward eating out as well as likes and dislikes about restaurants.**

All focus group participants indicated that they find dining out an entertaining experience. For younger adults the restaurant meal is an alternative to "being bored" at home as well as a good opportunity to get together with friends. While baby boomers and older adults appreciate that eating out is a way to socialize with friends, they also find that it provides an opportune time to be alone with their spouses.

Many respondents said they eat out to escape the drudgery of cooking. They like the fact that there is no preparation involved and no mess to clean up at a restaurant. In addition, they feel it is "nice to have someone wait on you."

Also high on the list of pluses is the variety of menu choices. Respondents said they liked to eat food that is different from what they would ordinarily eat at home, and they enjoy being free to select the particular items they like.

Convenience is also an important attraction of dining away from home. A quick meal at a reasonable price is important to many, especially 18 to 24-year-old participants.

* *With the help of the San Francisco-based market research firm of Matheson and Matheson, NRA organized nine focus groups in five metropolitan areas: Los Angeles, CA; Dallas, TX; Minneapolis, MN; Boston, MA and Atlanta, GA, between September 9 and 12, 1985.*

Consumers representing three distinctive demographic segments were selected as panelists for this study: young adults between the ages of 18 to 24, non-YUPPIE baby boomers 25 to 39 years of age and 50 to 64-year-olds. Income and job descriptions were also factors in the selection process. Other prerequisites included at least one visit to a fast food establishment and one visit to a sit-down restaurant within the two weeks prior to the focus group and the purchase of take out food from a restaurant, fast food outlet, supermarket or convenience store within that same time period.

Service is important . . .

Poor service is a real "turn off" for most participants. For example, baby boomers reveal that even if the food is good, terrible service is enough to ruin their evening. Older consumers find that "a waitress who bugs me all the time" is a real nuisance, while waiting in line to be served is a sore spot with younger adults.

As one participant remarked, "Being a good waiter is an art." What makes a good impression is the waiter or waitress who can pick up on the customer's mood. "If they know you're having a good time and become part of it, then it's great. If they recognize that you want to be left alone, that's great, too," said one respondent. Younger adults are also impressed when the wait personnel "act like they are having fun, not just like they have a job to do and want to get it over with."

"If it's a high buck restaurant, you don't notice [price]. If it's a middle range restaurant, you pay more attention."
—25 to 39-year-old

Comments by restaurant type . . .

Consumers like restaurants that make them feel special, and midscale independent restaurants fit the bill. They are recognized as having good food and service at a reasonable price. Participants indicated that because these restaurants are, for the most part, family-owned there is a personal touch that makes them want to come back.

Ethnic restaurants, especially with Mexican and Asian menus, are hot concepts with all groups. Independent establishments seem to be preferred over chain operations.

Chain/theme restaurants get mixed reviews. These establishments appeal to members of the focus groups because they offer a diverse selection of menu items, good service and a pleasant atmosphere where customers can have fun. On the other hand, chain/theme restaurants have their drawbacks—service can be depersonalized, and some participants described the food as monotonous and mass produced.

Convenience is the primary attraction of fast food. Young adults are most likely to patronize fast food restaurants because they can get a quick meal of "predictable" quality at a reasonable price.

Other complaints include:
- the food is frozen,
- the food quality and service varies greatly within the same chain,
- there are too many fried foods and
- there should be a greater variety of menu items, especially more vegetables and salad bars.

Upscale establishments are regarded as the place to go for a special occasion. Participants from the 18 to 24-year-old groups, however, often feel uncomfortable at this type of establishment because of the dress code and high prices.

A look at the competition . . .

Focus group participants were particularly impressed with the quality, variety and cost of the foods available at supermarket take outs. In particular, the supermarket salad bar is a big hit with those queried.

Convenience stores, however, received low marks from all focus group participants. Many revealed that they only patronize this type of establishment "when nothing else is open." Food quality received especially low ratings as participants indicated that it is "really just frozen food" that is heated in a microwave. In addition, some complained that the food items are overpriced.

"Dining out is when my spouse and I have our best conversations."
—50 to 64-year-old

Role of the restaurant in consumer's daily life . . .

Participants of all ages rely on eating out as a way to socialize. As one baby boomer stated, "It's the only time I get together with friends." In addition, some also look at their restaurant meal as a form of relaxation. According to one person in the 50 to 64-year-old segment, dining out "is when my spouse and I have our best conversations and are the most relaxed."

Eating in a restaurant is important to some participants because it means they don't have to cook. For example, younger adults revealed they eat out "because they have to; they have no time to make their own meals."

Eating out adds spice to consumers' lives. Consumers like the variety of restaurant concepts to choose from. As one baby boomer put it, "It's just not grits and cornbread in the South anymore; a lot of different foods are available."

Eating out gives many a chance to eat dishes that they would not ordinarily prepare at home. Among the foods that participants order when dining out are: lobster, all types of fish, sushi and ethnic cuisines, including Chinese, Italian and Mexican. In comparison, when at home, participants prepare simpler dishes, such as ribs, steak and chicken.

"Non-alcoholic beverages are for kids."
—18 to 24-year-old

Price—when it is important . . .

Price is a concern. In fact, expense was listed by participants in all groups as one of the reasons they do not eat out more often. As one young adult stated, "I'd eat out all the time if I had the money."

The importance of menu price varies depending on the occasion and restaurant type. For example, both older adults and baby boomers indicated that "for special occasions, you're willing to spend a little more." Additionally, one of the participants in the 25 to

39 age group noted that "if it's a high buck restaurant, you don't notice [price]. If it's a middle range restaurant, you pay more attention." Furthermore, young adults revealed that menu price is important depending on the meal they eat. One person in the 18 to 24-year-old segment remarked, "Lunch time you don't go to an expensive restaurant. [At] dinner, price doesn't matter."

Also, when participants perceived that their meal was a good value, price was less likely to be important. Both baby boomers and the 50 to 64-year-olds remarked that "if food and service are good, you're less concerned about price." But many respondents, particularly the 18 to 24-year-olds and baby boomers, indicated that price was an important factor right before payday and during the week. In fact, one young adult said that "if you can't afford a restaurant, you don't go."

"I see restaurant signs. If one looks interesting, I'll try the restaurant."
—25 to 39-year-old

What trends are important . . .

Although participants recognize the importance of diet and nutrition in their lives, many admit that they throw caution to the wind and splurge when they eat a meal away from home. One young adult reported, "I just want it to taste good and fill my stomach; I don't care about nutrition when I go to restaurants." Another older consumer said, "When I go out to eat, the last thing I worry about is cholesterol."

Other consumers, however, did express concern about their diet. According to one of the 25 to 39-year-olds, "I don't eat out more often because, when I do, I eat too much fat and too much food." In addition, some mature adults said they do watch calories and cholesterol intake when dining away from home.

On the other hand, many baby boomers said they restrict the amount of red meat they eat as opposed to maintaining a strict, meatless vegetarian diet. They opt for more chicken, fish, fruit and vegetables.

Salad bars are a big hit, according to those who were part of this qualitative research project. Customers like the variety of items salad bars feature so they can have the type of salad they want. Many also were pleased with the different and more unusual types of vegetables now being offered.

Appetizers have caught the attention of many consumers, especially the 18 to 24-year-old crowd. These participants said they are likely to make a whole meal out of appetizers: "Sometimes I have the salad bar and appetizers; that's dinner," said one respondent. However, mature adults expressed very little interest in appetizers. One respondent explained, "I used to order them, but it's too much food."

Like appetizers, "freebies" were most popular with the young adults who claimed "they are starchy and absorb the alcohol." Furthermore, many of these consumers like to make a meal of them. "Freebies," however, do not make as big an impression on baby boomers or mature adults.

Participants from all three age groups are cautious when they drink, but the idea of a non-alcoholic drink as an alternative to alcoholic beverages was not well received. One person in the 18 to 24-year-old category commented: "Non-alcoholic beverages are for kids." And a baby boomer expressed a similar sentiment, "I don't like fake drinks. I'd prefer iced tea." In addition, several complained that "I don't like paying as much for a non-alcoholic drink."

What motivates customers to try new restaurants/menu items? . . .

Participants from all groups said that their decision depends on a variety of factors, including:

- friends who have tried it
- restaurant critic reviews
- advertised specials; coupons and
- being tired of the places they usually visit.

In addition, a few participants revealed that they are very adventuresome when deciding upon where to eat. They will try an establishment based on only seeing the restaurant as they drive past. One respondent between 25 and 39 years old said, "I see restaurant signs. If one looks interesting, I'll try the restaurant."

A return visit, however, requires satisfaction: good food, service and atmosphere as well as a positive price/value relationship and an overall good feeling about the experience.

Focus group participants also agreed on the reasons why they experiment with new menu items. Among the reasons cited were:

- if it is a special,
- if the waiter or waitress recommends it,
- if a friend recommends it,
- if it sounds good or looks good on someone's plate or
- if it piques their curiosity.

However, participants indicated they are more choosy the second time around. They will only order an item again if it tastes good or if the price is reasonable.

—Susan Adelman

"When I go out to eat, the last thing I worry about is cholesterol."
—50 to 64-year-old

A word of caution

It is important to keep in mind that the information presented here is based on a qualitative study of a limited number of consumers. This information is in no way indicative of the behavior and attitudes of all consumers or the behavior and attitude of any demographic group involved in this study. Rather, this information should be used as a guide to better understand what motivates consumers to eat in a restaurant and their feelings toward their dining experience. Furthermore, the results of this preliminary survey will serve as the foundation for an in-depth, quantitative study of consumer attitudes and behavior.

Upbeat outlook for food costs in 1986

This article highlights USDA's latest commodity information and food cost and supply outlook for the months ahead. The information presented here is based on reports presented by many of USDA's leading economists at the Agricultural Outlook Conference in Washington, DC, December 3–5, 1985.

The outlook for wholesale food costs in 1986 looks promising. Moderate inflation, relatively steady consumer demand and ample food supplies should result in relatively low increases in food prices at the wholesale level, according to economists at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Outlook Conference.

The National Restaurant Association is also anticipating moderate wholesale food cost gains in 1986, up 2.5 percent versus the 1.8 percent decline expected for 1985. Slightly higher inflation and increased prices for beef, pork and eggs in 1986 will cause the larger jump in overall wholesale food prices.

Overall retail food prices are forecast to rise between two and four percent this year, according to USDA. Additionally, grocery store food prices should advance one to three percent, while menu prices are projected to climb a higher three to five percent. NRA has forecast a 3.9 percent advance in 1986 restaurant meal prices.

Beef supplies on the decline . . .

Beef production will decline in 1986. Lower feed costs due to large grain and forage supplies will influence farmers to cut back on the number of cattle they send to market. Instead, producers will retain cattle to rebuild inventories that had been drastically reduced during the 1983 and 1984 seasons when widespread droughts, poor livestock returns and the need to generate cash flow caused farmers to reduce their herds. As a result of reduced supplies, prices should strengthen.

Beef highlights

- Overall beef supplies are expected to decline 7.2 percent this year to 21.8 billion pounds and farmers are expected to reduce the amount of cattle they send to market. However, production may rise if producers are unable to keep dressed weights down or if farm legislation is passed that would force dairy farmers to reduce their herds.
- In the first half of the year, beef supplies should reach 10.8 billion pounds—a 6.9 percent drop from production of 11.6 billion pounds during the same period in 1985.
- In the first quarter of 1986 beef prices should reach $62 per cwt., approximating first quarter 1985's level. However, there should be a dramatic 14.5 percent jump in the second quarter when beef prices are expected to average $66 per cwt. compared with $57.66 per cwt. in the second quarter of 1985.

Pork production to dip . . .

Despite low production costs, pork producers are likely to reduce production in 1986. Poor returns and continued financial pressure will cause farmers to hold back expansion plans. As a result of reduced supplies, pork prices will probably rise.

Pork highlights

- Total pork production will reach 14.6 billion pounds in 1986, dropping 0.7 percent from 14.7 billion pounds last year.
- In the first half of the year, pork supplies should total 7.3 billion pounds, down 1.4 percent from the same period in 1985.
- Pork production in the second half of this year, however, should approximate the 7.3 billion pounds reached in the second half of 1985.
- For the year, prices are forecast to average $48 per cwt., a 7.9 percent increase over $44.50 per cwt. in 1985.
- During the first six months of 1986, pork prices should climb to $46.50 per cwt., representing a 2.9 percent increase over the $45.20 per cwt. recorded in the first half of 1985.

Poultry production on the rise . . .

Broiler and turkey production is projected to expand in 1986, according to USDA Economist Alan Baker. The reasons: Low feed costs, due to large supplies of corn and soybeans, increased consumer demand for poultry products and reduced supplies of red meat. However, prices should remain fairly stable throughout the year, as expanding production will be

Percent of total cost of food purchases paid by restaurants

Commodity	Percent
Beef & veal	24.8%
Dairy products	11.9
Vegetables	9.6
Bakery products	9.2
Fish & shellfish	9.2
Other meats	8.7
Poultry & eggs	6.4
Beverages	5.6
Sugar & sweets	4.2
Fats & oils	3.0
Fruits & juices	2.1
Flour & cereal	1.3
Other	4.1

Source: National Restaurant Association

To help calculate how commodity price changes can affect overall food costs, here is a breakdown of the major commodities and the average proportion of total food costs they account for.

offset by declining red meat supplies and moderate economic growth.

Poultry highlights

- Broiler production should total 14.2 billion pounds in 1986, a 4.4 percent gain from 13.6 billion pounds in 1985 and a 9.2 percent increase over the 13.0 billion pounds recorded in 1984.
- Broiler supplies should record a 4.5 percent advance in the first half of 1986 to 7.0 billion pounds. In the second half, total production should climb to a slightly higher 7.2 billion pounds, a 5.9 percent increase over the comparable period last year.
- Broiler prices are expected to average 50 cents a pound in 1986, approximating the average for 1985.
- Overall turkey supplies are expected to reach 2.9 billion pounds in 1986, a 3.6 percent gain from 2.8 billion pounds the year before.
- During the first half of 1986, turkey production should be up 9.0 percent and total 1.2 billion pounds versus production of 1.1 billion pounds during the same period in 1985. In the second half, supplies are forecast to reach 1.7 billion pounds, matching the level reached in the same six month period in 1985.
- Turkey prices should weaken in 1986, posting a 14.9 percent decline from 74 cents a pound in 1985 to 63 cents a pound this year.

Egg production to decline . . .

Egg output is expected to decline in 1986, and prices will rise. Producers have been caught in a cost-price squeeze because of weak prices in 1985. As a result, they will reduce their supply of laying hens in 1986 by cutting back orders for replacement pullets and selling their least productive hens.

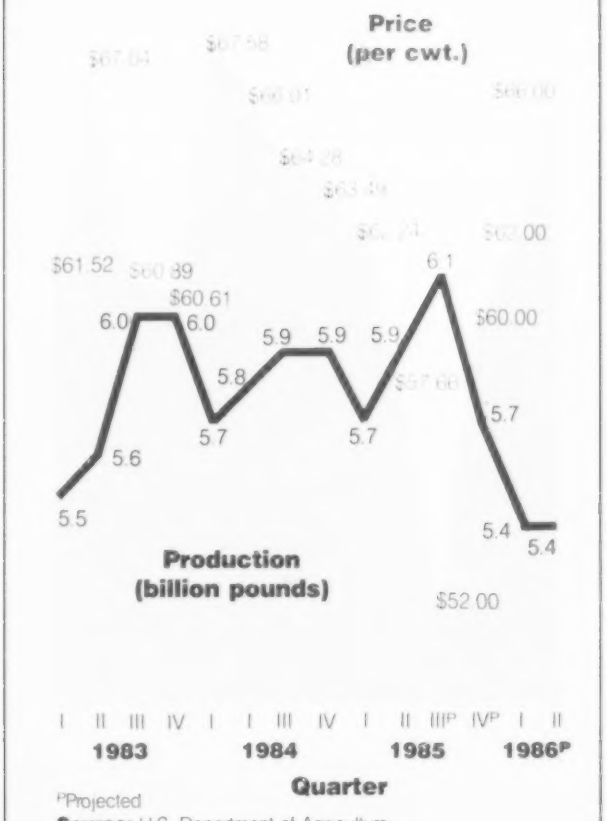
Egg highlights

- During 1986 egg supplies should fall from 5.7 billion dozen to 5.6 billion dozen, a 1.8 percent decline.
- Between January and June, production is expected to total 2.8 billion dozen, which mirrors production in the same period in 1985. In the second half of the year, production will also reach 2.8 billion dozen. This represents a 3.4 percent drop from supplies of 2.9 billion dozen in the last six months of 1985.
- For the year, egg prices are expected to average 70 cents a dozen, up 6.1 percent from 66 cents a dozen in 1985.

Smaller fruit supplies expected . . .

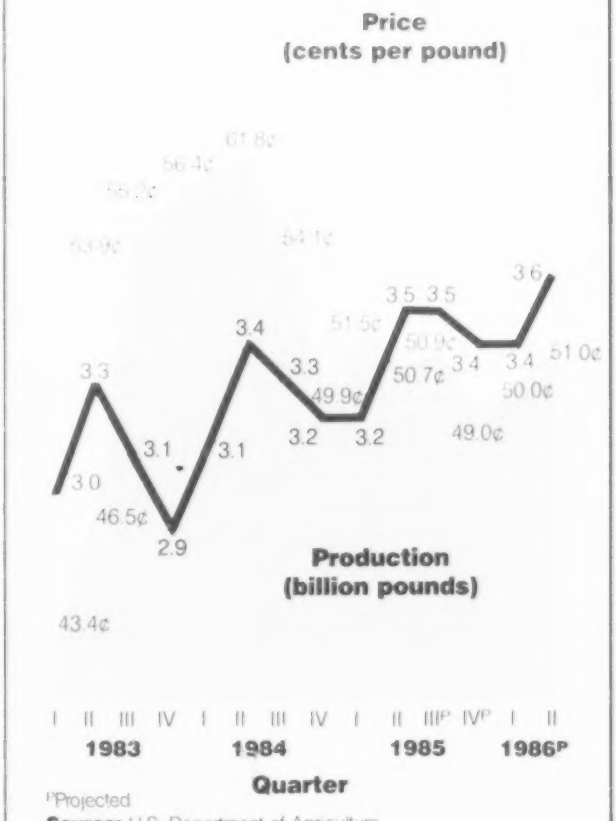
Overall fruit supplies are expected to be lower during the 1985/86 season than in

Beef production and prices (1983 through second quarter 1986P)



PProjected
Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Broiler production and prices (1983 through second quarter 1986P)



PProjected
Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Percent change in wholesale commodity prices 1977 to first 10 mos. 1985

	1977 to 1978	1978 to 1979	1979 to 1980	1980 to 1981	1981 to 1982	1982 to 1983	1983 to 1984	10 mos. 1984 to 10 mos. 1985
Bakery products	7.8%	10.0%	11.7%	8.3%	3.3%	3.2%	4.8%	4.6%
Flour & cereal	13.1	12.4	12.3	-7.0	-5.3	1.1	1.8	0.7
Beef & veal	28.4	24.7	3.2	-5.0	-0.8	-3.3	nc	-8.5
Other meats	16.7	-2.8	-2.7%	7.6	16.9	-8.7	-0.4	-1.7
Poultry & eggs	8.1	0.7	1.0	2.4	-6.7	3.2	12.0	-10.8
Fish & shellfish	6.4	22.6	-3.2	1.8	11.8	6.3	11.5	1.2
Sugar & sweets	6.6	6.9	35.4	-2.9	-2.6	5.0	2.4	-1.0
Vegetables	6.0	2.0	7.5	22.6	-4.4	1.2	8.4	-8.6
Fruits & juices	17.6	8.7	4.2	4.1	2.9	2.9	6.6	1.3
Beverages	-8.6	0.8	0.8	-2.3	4.5	1.3	5.2	2.0
Dairy products	8.6	12.1	12.1	6.4	1.3	0.6	3.6	-0.3
Fats & oils	6.1	6.4	6.4	2.1	-1.4	8.8	21.0	-4.2
NRA food cost index	**11.2%**	**12.2%**	**5.0%**	**3.0%**	**2.5%**	**0.7%**	**5.0%**	**2.7%**
All food, producer price index[1]	**10.5%**	**9.5%**	**8.0%**	**3.1%**	**1.1%**	**1.1%**	**4.8%**	**1.9%**

[1]Includes all processed foods (except soft drinks, alcoholic beverages and animal feeds) plus eggs and fresh and dried fruits and vegetables.
Sources: *Producer Price Index*, Bureau of Labor Statistics; NRA.

the prior year. Although prices will strengthen as a result of reduced supplies and stable consumer demand, the gain should be moderate due to modest increases in food marketing costs.

Fruit highlights

- U.S. citrus supplies are forecast to reach 11.3 million tons during the 1985/86 season, up 7.6 percent from 10.5 million tons the year before. This gain can be attributed to a 27 percent increase in Florida orange production.
- Citrus prices should decline throughout the year, as increased supplies of oranges will dampen overall prices.
- Non-citrus fruit production, which includes major tree fruits and grapes, is expected to decline 1.6 percent during the 1985/86 season to 12.5 million tons. The decrease is expected to come from reduced summer fruit production.
- Production of both apples and pears will be down this year, 2.4 percent and 4.9 percent, respectively, resulting in higher prices for both these commodities. On the other hand, supplies of grapes are expected to rise 3.8 percent to 5.4 million tons, and this will mean weaker prices.

Vegetable supplies and prices down...

Commercial vegetable production is expected to decline in 1985/86 despite relatively stable demand. However, vegetable imports will pick up the slack and, as a result, prices are forecast to fall.

Vegetable highlights:

- Supplies of commercial vegetables are forecast to decline 3.2 percent to 429 million cwt. from 443 million cwt. the year before. This decline reflects reduced production of fresh market and dual purpose vegetables (vegetables which can be eaten either raw or cooked, such as carrots and broccoli) as well as smaller supplies of the four major processing vegetables (green peas, snap beans, sweet corn and tomatoes).
- Although supplies will be down, prices are forecast to fall. Vegetable imports will offset reduced U.S. supplies and, as a result, prices will decline. The average price for commercial vegetables is expected to decline between seven and 10 percent during the 1985/86 season.
- On the other hand, total commercial production of potatoes, sweet potatoes and dry edible beans should rise. Total output is expected to reach 436 million cwt., an impressive 11.2 percent advance from the prior year.
- Increased production of these vegetables will result in markedly lower prices in the 1985/86 season. In particular, potato prices are forecast to fall 25 to 30 percent below last season's average price of $5.69 per cwt.

Dairy supplies to rise . . .

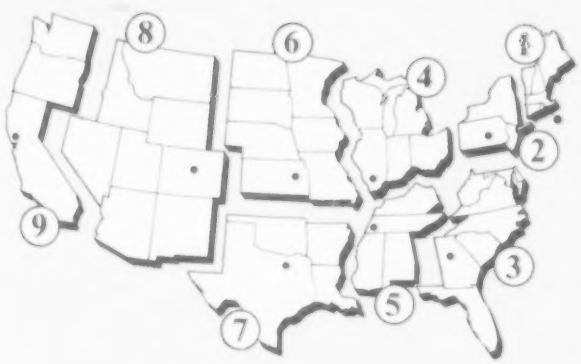
Ample supplies of milk products are expected in 1986, according to USDA Economist Clifford Carmen. This reflects lower feed costs and increased demand as well as better farm management and new technologies. Furthermore, output of cheese and butter is also forecast to rise in 1986. In response to this increased production, dairy prices should fall.

Dairy highlights

- In 1986, milk production is expected to rise 3.5 percent to 148 billion pounds compared with production of 143 billion pounds in 1985. In addition, commercial use of milk should climb between one and three percent.
- Milk prices are forecast to average $12.40 per cwt. in 1986, representing a 2.7 percent decline from $12.75 per cwt. in 1985.
- The outcome of pending farm legislation could affect the outlook for dairy products. A reduction in the support price for milk, currently $11.60 per cwt., could force farmers to cut back production in order to keep prices from becoming depressed. —*Susan Adelman*

How's business?

by Anne Papa



1 NEW ENGLAND

Location: Pawtucket, RI
NRA member: Joseph Silvestri
Operation: Mama Spumoni Restaurant
Profile: Fullservice restaurant, 2 units
In business: 10 years
Seats: Average 250
Meals served: Lunch, dinner

"The holiday season always means less business," observes **Joe Silvestri,** manager of Mama Spumoni Restaurant. He attributes the slack to the predominance of blue collar workers in Rhode Island who "can't afford to spend that extra dollar around Christmas." But generally, the addition of a new Mama Spumoni unit in nearby Warwick, RI, has contributed to a banner year for the company. "This past summer we did our highest sales volume ever," Silvestri reports.

The original Mama Spumoni Restaurant is housed in one of the oldest buildings in Pawtucket. The menu consists of Italian dishes, predominantly seafood, with fresh steamers and lobsters as specialties of the house. To augment the Italian theme, both units are dimly lit in the tradition of Italian eateries. However, says Silvestri, a contemporary touch is added with brass, plants and, in the Warwick unit, a lush greenhouse.

2 MIDDLE ATLANTIC

Location: Sunbury, PA
NRA member: Donna R. Seidel
Operation: Jay's Dutch Pantry
Profile: Fullservice restaurant
In business: 9 years
Seats: 152
Meals served: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Although numerous factories have recently closed in Pennsylvania Dutch country, business remains good at Jay's Dutch Pantry, according to manager **Jacqualyn Hetrick.** "It's not as predictable as it once was," Hetrick admits, "but we're still doing a steady business." She believes the restaurant's emphasis on traditional foods in a quaint setting are what keep patrons coming back.

Actually, Jay's Dutch Pantry encompasses two entirely different restaurant concepts. Diners can choose between Tiffany's North Side, a room dominated by barn wood, stucco and Tiffany lamps—each locally-made lamp is of a different design—or the adjacent Dutch Pantry, which provides a cozy, "country" atmosphere. Hetrick says visitors often comment on the unusual wall-hanging that adorns the Dutch Pantry called a "distelfink." The traditional Pennsylvania Dutch sculpture of two intertwined birds is a symbol of love.

3 SOUTH ATLANTIC

Location: Atlanta, GA
NRA member: Leigh Taylor
Operation: The Mad Italian, Inc.
Profile: Family restaurants, 5 units
In business: 12 years
Seats: Average 120
Meals served: Lunch, dinner

"Atlanta is boomtown," boasts **Richard Brown,** manager of The Mad Italian. Consequently, he reports, the five Mad Italian units located in Atlanta are all doing quite well. "Of course," he adds, "a good economy alone won't guarantee good business. You must have quality food and service—and we do."

The Mad Italian specializes in what the name implies—Italian cuisine. The restaurants are known throughout Atlanta for their homemade sauces and creative pasta dishes. Interestingly, however, the house specialty is Philadelphia cheesesteaks, served on fresh rolls shipped daily from Rochester, NY.

The "Caesar-type" decor of the Mad Italian units is lightened up with plenty of greenery and touches of neon. Each unit also has an open kitchen. "People have always been leery about what goes on behind closed doors," explains Brown. "An open kitchen allows them to see exactly what is going on their plates."

4 EAST NORTH CENTRAL

Location: Herrin, IL
NRA member: Mary Licos
Operation: Mary's
Profile: Fullservice restaurant
In business: 5 years
Seats: 60
Meals served: Lunch, dinner

Since **Mary Licos** first opened Mary's in 1980, she has seen business increase every year. In 1985, traffic improved a full 20 percent. "It's all word-of-mouth advertising," Licos attests. Even though the troubled coal industry is hurting the immediate area of Herrin, some customers who have heard about Mary's will drive 100 miles to eat there. The restaurant is also located near the interstate that connects St. Louis, MO, and Chicago, IL, making Mary's a pleasant stop for travelers.

The charm of Mary's is its atmosphere. Located in a century-old home, the five-room restaurant has two working fireplaces and the original bar and kitchen. The outside of the Victorian structure is painted a warm, peach color—indicative of the traditional hospitality found within.

5 EAST SOUTH CENTRAL

Location: Memphis, TN
NRA member: Charles Vergos
Operation: The Rendezvous
Profile: Specialty dinnerhouse
In business: 38 years
Seats: 400
Meals served: Lunch (weekends only), dinner

"Everybody in town seems to be doing good business," says **Charles Vergos,** owner of The Rendezvous. "I know we are. We have been serving an average of four tons of meat per week."

Perhaps The Rendezvous's popularity can most be attributed to the one menu item served almost exclusively—charcoal broiled, long back ribs. "No dessert, no coffee, no china, no silver," explains Vergos. "Just plenty of good ribs."

The Rendezvous is located in the basement of a building next door to Memphis' renowned Peabody Hotel. "People have to come through an alley and down stairs to get to our place," says Vergos. Once inside, the atmosphere is all-American. Paintings of rural home life adorn the walls, while objects typical to the Midwest region—farm equipment, sleds, saddles—hang from the walls and ceiling. Big tables with checkered tablecloths complete the "Americana" look.

6 WEST NORTH CENTRAL

Location: Topeka, KS
NRA member: Richard Cummins
Operation: Por'e Richards
Profile: Coffee shop
In business: 28 years
Seats: 370
Meals served: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Richard Cummins, owner of Por'e Richards, reports that the economy is lagging a bit in Topeka. However, last year his restaurant moved from an outskirts location to the heart of town—and business has improved.

Because Por'e Richards' new location is surrounded by office buildings, lunch business has increased threefold. Dinner business and late-night breakfast business—the restaurant stays open until 4:00 a.m.—have remained about the same. Menu items that are popular in coffee shops across the country—steaks, eggs and plenty of strong, hot coffee—are the mainstay at Por'e Richards.

Cummins does point out that his coffee shop is unique because of its mahogany paneling and black walls and ceilings. "We've made black walls famous around here," he chuckles.

7 WEST SOUTH CENTRAL

Location: Denton, TX
NRA member: Robert Berg
Operation: Locust Street Grill
Profile: Family private club
In business: 2 years
Seats: 144
Meals served: Lunch, dinner

Geneva Berg, co-owner of the Locust Street Grill, says she "can't complain" about the restaurant's success over the past two years. She does, however, complain about Denton laws that prohibit the sale of liquor by the glass. To adhere to this regulation, restaurants must become private clubs. "Everyone who comes in for a drink must be a member of the club," she explains.

But Berg says the Locust Street Grill has no difficulty attracting members. Located in a turn-of-the-century, restored building, the interior is highlighted by exposed brick walls and marble tabletops. The menu in this family restaurant has something for everyone, from hamburgers and french fries to a full-course steak dinner.

8 MOUNTAIN

Location: Denver, CO
NRA member: James Arenal
Operation: The Denim Broker
Profile: Fullservice restaurant
In business: 2 years
Seats: 200
Meals served: Lunch, dinner

By virtue of its proximity to Stapleton International Airport, The Denim Broker continues to enjoy a profitable business. However, says owner **James Arenal,** the overall economy in Denver is down—probably because of over-eager urban planners who are now left with too much development and not enough people. "Fortunately, I serve a lot of business travelers on expense accounts," he says.

Under its original ownership, The Denim Broker was a casual, country-Western restaurant, complete with blue-jean-clad waitresses (hence the name). When Arenal took over two years ago, he retained the country-Western theme but made the restaurant more upscale. He bought dressier outfits for the wait staff, added new oak paneling and installed four skylights in the main dining room. The Denim Broker's menu specializes in the fixed-price steak and seafood meals.

9 PACIFIC

Location: San Francisco, CA
NRA member: Robert Romano
Operation: Romano's
Profile: Fullservice restaurant
In business: 30 years
Seats: 80
Meals served: Dinner

"They say that in San Francisco there's a seat in a restaurant for every man, woman and child who lives here," says **Robert Romano,** owner of Romano's. Therefore, he adds, it is not the local economy that makes it a challenge to operate a successful restaurant in San Francisco—it is the competition.

But Romano's has fared well over the past three decades, and Romano reports that it continues to do so. The menu includes both northern and southern Italian specialties, but no pizza. "We tried pizza about eight years ago, but found it gave us the wrong image," recalls Romano.

It is Romano's unique front entrance that makes the restaurant stand out. Customers enter through a lighted, grotto-like cove that juts out over the sidewalk. Inside, the front lobby is flanked by two large fountains, and the sunken dining room offers just-entering guests a sweeping view of the restaurant.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Beer is the main show

There are plenty of bars where you can see your food being prepared, but the Tap Room, a pub-style restaurant in Manhattan, is promoting itself as the only place where you can see your beer being brewed. The Tap Room has opened directly adjacent to the New Amsterdam Amber beer brewery, with a glass wall dividing them so restaurant customers can observe beer being brewed.

Joan Dacey, director of marketing and special events for the Tap Room, says the restaurant has only been open a month but is doing quite well. "Customers can see the copper kettles the beer is made in," she says, "which really puts them in the mood for a cold one." —*USA TODAY*

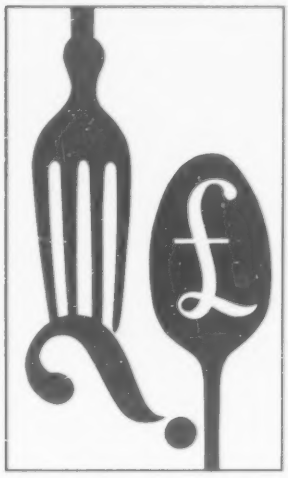
This place is a real dive

When people in Denver, CO, call the Casa Bonita restaurant a dive, they mean it—literally. Every five minutes or so at Casa Bonita a "cliff diver" dives from the top of a 32-foot waterfall, cascading down one wall of the restaurant into a 14-foot pool below.

"It's entertainment," explains manager Mark Willis. "It gives the restaurant an authentic Acapulco flavor." But before you pack your swimming trunks for a trip to Denver, be advised that only professional divers are permitted to make the plunge. —***NRA NEWS*** *interview*

Hmmm, I'd say that meal was worth . . .

Travellers to London, England, know that dining out at Britain's fancier restaurants is getting pricier by the mouthful. To combat



the trend, restaurateur Peter Ilic has opened a new restaurant in North London that is—literally—priceless.

At Ilic's restaurant, called Just Around the Corner, there are no prices on the menu, none on the wine list and none on the bill. Customers decide for themselves what their meals were worth and pay according to their consciences.

Technically, diners could consume three courses, hiccup their way through five bottles of champers and walk off without paying a pence. But Ilic says that has not happened. "So far everybody has paid," he reports. "Nobody has yet been a spoilsport." In fact, he says, one gentleman gave him a signed blank check in return for the unsigned blank bill.

—*London Daily Express*

Baby Maines

Not all baby vegetables come from California—in fact, some even come *to* California. At a recent Produce Marketing Association convention in San Francisco, CA, the hit of the show were Baby Maines—small, round white or russet potatoes, introduced by the Maine Potato Commission.

Commission spokesperson Stanley Greaves says restaurants around the country are already using the 1.5" to 2.5" potatoes. Baby Maines are sold in 30-pound boxes and are shipped with recipes.

—*Maine Potato Commission*

A lawyer's choice

When not in court, lawyers spend a great deal of time in restaurants—wooing clients, reviewing cases with colleagues or simply meeting with friends. But which restaurants do they frequent most?

The American Bar Association (ABA) wanted to find out, which is why they published a "Lawyer's Choice" survey in a recent issue of *ABA Journal, The Lawyer's Magazine*. ABA members were asked to recommend their favorite restaurants in 25 major cities.

ABA Director of Graphics David Jendras reports that more than 8,000 attorneys responded to the survey, nominating close to 1,000 restaurants. Forty-five restaurants recommended most often were published in a special ABA restaurant guide.

So which restaurants do lawyers frequent most? In Boston, MA, it is Anthony's Pier 4 and Legal Sea Foods. In Los Angeles, CA, it is Bernard's and Mama Siam and in Baltimore, MD, it is the Prime Rib and Tio Pepe's—to name a few. —***NRA NEWS*** *interview*

Introducing 5 New NRA Seminar Programs for 1986

Professionals throughout the foodservice industry have grown to respect and depend on NRA's education programs. Each NRA seminar, workshop and conference offers viable data, state-of-the-art skills and expertise from top industry achievers.

The five new management programs being introduced for 1986 represent the association's continued effort to provide foodservice operators with current information on every aspect of their business. As the scope of industry activities grow, NRA will continue to offer more programs to meet the operator's needs in the dynamics of today's market.

Taking advantage of these excellent programs can be your first step to maintaining excellence in your operation.

Beverage Management

Advancing technology, rapidly changing consumer attitudes, current liability laws and the need for constant controls, make NRA's **Beverage Management** seminar a must for any foodservice operator wishing to compete in today's beverage market. This program brings together all the information you need to run a profitable beverage operation in today's dynamic marketplace.

Newport Beach, CA
February 25–26

Boston, MA
March 3–4

Chicago, IL
May 17–18

Oklahoma City, OK
June 10–11

Business Dynamics for Women in Foodservice

The traditional roles of women in the workplace have changed. **Women in Foodservice** focuses on the potential of women in leadership roles in foodservice and the skills needed to get there.

Washington, DC
February 6

Denver, CO
April 21

Chicago, IL
May 18

San Francisco, CA
May 2

Anaheim, CA
May 4

Foodservice Operators' Legal Workshop

Attend NRA's **Legal Workshop** and get the answers to legal questions before they become legal problems. This program is designed for the hands-on operator that needs the resources to make day-to-day operating decisions and know that he is operating according to the many laws and regulations affecting the foodservice industry.

Boston, MA
February 4

Washington, DC
March 2

San Francisco, CA
March 5

Denver, CO
March 21

Chicago, IL
May 18

Philadelphia, PA
June 10

Miami, FL
June 16

Negotiating for, and Financing Foodservice Facilities

The contract you sign for your property can make or break the future success of your operation. In this program you will learn the standards as well as find out how to make the best deal possible and understand when it becomes imperative to say "no" on a deal that would plague you for years.

San Francisco, CA
February 6–7

Fort Worth, TX
March 26–27

Chicago, IL
May 17–18

Wine and the Bottom Line

Foodservice operators that initiate an effort to boost wine are surprised by the potential that they had overlooked in the past. **Wine and the Bottom Line** focuses on the key elements of successfully merchandising wine including staff training, purchasing, working with distributors and building your wine knowledge.

Washington, DC
April 9

Chicago, IL
April 15

Detroit, MI
May 5

Cincinnati, OH
June 9

For more information on NRA education programs, please call or write NRA at: 800/424-5156 (toll free) or 202/638-6100
National Restaurant Association,
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Build your business in 1986